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THE CHANGING CULTURE
OF THE SNOWDRIFT CHIPEWYAN



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Secretary of State

THE CHANGING CULTURE
OF THE SNOWDRIFT CHIPEWYAN

by James W. VanStone ✓

Ottawa, 1965

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Résumé

Le village d'Indiens Chipewyans de Snowdrift, qui est situé sur la rive sud-est du Grand lac des Esclaves et qui comptait 150 âmes en 1961, ne remonte pas tout au moins dans sa forme actuelle, à plus de dix années. Toutefois, les environs du village ont été le point de rassemblement des habitants de la région depuis 1925, alors que la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson avait établi une poste de traite à l'endroit où se trouve aujourd'hui le village. Cependant, les éléments qui ont motivé la concentration relativement récente de la population permanente autour du poste ne se rattachent pas nécessairement au commerce des fourrures. Ces éléments comprennent aussi: 1° l'extension des services gouvernementaux qui réduisent la dépendance des Indiens à l'égard du piégeage en tant que source de revenu; 2° la construction récente d'une école de l'Etat dans le village; 3° l'amélioration de la situation en matière de logement; 4° enfin, la disponibilité d'emplois rémunérés.

Le cycle annuel des travaux nécessaires à la subsistance de la population de Snowdrift comprend la pêche, en automne, dans les eaux avoisinantes, le piégeage en hiver et au printemps, de la martre, du vison, du renard blanc, du castor et du rat musqué, et un peu de travail rémunéré en été. La structure sociale de la population de Snowdrift se caractérise par l'accroissement des naissances et l'apport démographique des nouveaux habitants qui viennent s'y établir, cet apport étant directement proportionnel à l'allure de l'influx de nouveaux venus. L'organisation des services officiels du village se borne presque exclusivement aux rapports avec les fonctionnaires de l'administration fédérale; on pourrait même dire que le village, administrativement parlant, n'a à près pas de vie collective.

Le processus de l'évolution culturelle des Chipewyans de Snowdrift n'a qu'un seul aspect, et on serait en droit de la considérer comme un processus d'évolution dirigée. Cette situation est fort loin d'être unique en son genre; on pourrait même soutenir qu'elle est la caractéristique de l'évolution culturelle de presque tous les Indiens de l'Amérique du Nord. C'est ce genre d'évolution qui altère les éléments fondamentaux d'une culture et favorise l'éclosion de cultures secondaires propres aux réserves, que James a si bien décrites (1961, page 744). Si l'on garde ce qui précède à l'esprit, ce qu'il importe de bien comprendre n'est pas tellement que Snowdrift est un village Chipewyan ou que la localité est peuplée de gens dont le mode de vie est typiquement Chipewyan, mais plutôt que c'est une localité typique

des régions septentrionales, ayant des rapports d'un genre particulier avec la culture canadienne. Tout comme d'autres localités situées à la même latitude, Snowdrift dépend de sources extérieures d'approvisionnement; le village évolue et se développe d'une façon particulière, n'ayant que peu ou pas de rapport avec l'origine ethnique des habitants. Selon l'auteur, l'allure de l'évolution culturelle dirigée et la perte de la culture originale qui en découle, ont presque fait disparaître les différences ethniques qui distinguaient les peuplades des alentours du Grand lac des Esclaves et du bassin du Mackenzie; elles ont donné essor à l'espèce de culture secondaire propre aux réserves indienne des Etats-Unis et du Canada méridional. Toutefois, il y aurait lieu de faire une étude approfondie de la région, afin d'étayer un tel point de vue.

Acknowledgments

The field-work on which this study is based was financed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The author is grateful to Mr. Victor F. Valentine, formerly of the Research Centre, for his assistance and encouragement.

In conducting the study, the author relied heavily on participation and observation. Thus, nearly every individual at Snowdrift helped him achieve a greater knowledge and understanding of community life. The following persons were particularly helpful in contributing time and effort toward the assemblage of the data on which this study is based: Father F. Dauvet, O.M.I.; Mr. Michael Brown and Mr. Arnulf Steinwand, of the Hudson's Bay Company; Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Lockhart; Mr. Jim Klotze; Mr. Jim Fatt; Mr. Bruno Nataway; Mr. Edward Catholique; Mr. Victor Catholique; Mr. Robert Noyes; and Mr. Louison Abel.

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Introduction

Field-work among the Chipewyan Indians at Snowdrift, Northwest Territories, arose out of a general interest on the part of the writer and some of his colleagues (in the Department of Anthropology) at the University of Toronto in the problems of culture change in the area of the Mackenzie River valley and Great Slave Lake. Although it was postulated that this region would turn out to be a relatively homogeneous universe of interacting forces, this generalization was qualified by the realization that in the history of contact, different sections of the area would show a variation in effects. Thus, some population groupings in the area would have been exposed more intensively to new penetrations, such as mining and commercial fishing, while others would still be following a trapping-trading economy and have much less access to schools and other aspects of an urban environment. Obviously, in order to understand all the operative factors, it would be necessary that subgroups or communities displaying all the differential effects of the historic acculturative continuum be discovered and made available for study. It was proposed that this information be obtained by a field survey to be followed by more intensive work in certain communities chosen as representative of specific acculturative levels.

Although this survey was conceived as the initial phase of the total project, it was realized that at the same time more intensive work could begin in a community that represented a low level of intensity as far as acculturative factors were concerned and that was farthest removed from the urbanizing influences which are a growing characteristic of the entire region. This intensive study of a relatively isolated community, heavily involved in a trapping-trading economy, was to serve as a comparative foundation on which other phases of the project would be built.

The village of Snowdrift was chosen for this first intensive stage of the project because it appeared to be one of the most isolated communities in the Mackenzie River – Great Slave Lake area, because it had a relatively homogeneous population, and because it benefited only slightly from the urbanizing influences that affect many of the river communities and the more accessible villages at the west end of Great Slave Lake. Whether or not Snowdrift was the best possible choice might be open to question. Nevertheless, it fulfilled a sizeable number of requirements for the initial intensive phase of the project.

The work at Snowdrift, begun during the summer of 1960, was continued during the summer of 1961 and for a month in the winter of that year. In all, the writer spent twenty-eight weeks in the village. Prior to the first summer's work, arrangements were made to rent an empty house from an Indian family. The author settled down as unobtrusively as possible and,

from the first day of his arrival, received many visitors who were curious about his presence in the village. Similar arrangements were made during the second summer, and in December-January of 1961-62 the writer accompanied a Snowdrift resident on his trap-line, thus obtaining a better insight into winter activities than was possible through summer conversations and interviews.

During the course of the field-work very little use was made of paid informants, the major reliance being on participant observation. The writer observed and participated to the best of his ability and then asked questions based on the gaps in his observations. In most cases this was done informally while visiting or being visited, but occasionally it was advisable to hire an informant to obtain such information as the kinship terminology and the details about aspects of the seasonal cycle that would take place after the author left the community.

Whenever possible, the information obtained during the day was outlined in a small notebook. At convenient times this information was transferred to five- by eight-inch cards which were punched for the major categories of culture (i.e., the individual, social structure, work round) as well as the sub-categories (i.e., nuclear family, childhood, artifacts, hunting and fishing techniques). Since the punched cards were filed according to an outline of desired data, it was possible, throughout the course of the field-work, to determine which aspects of culture needed to be emphasized to give as complete a picture of village life as possible.

Two preliminary reports, based on the material collected at Snowdrift, have been published by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre (VanStone, 1961, 1963).

CHAPTER ONE

The Setting

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Chipewyan Indian community of Snowdrift is located on the southeast shore of Great Slave Lake in the vicinity of latitude $63^{\circ} 30' N$ and longitude $110^{\circ} 15' W$ (see Figure 1). The eastern end of the lake, which lies entirely within an area of Precambrian rocks, has an extremely intricate shoreline with many bays and innumerable islands. The wooded, rolling hills, from 500 to 1,000 feet above sea-level, are characteristic of the country around Snowdrift, and many lakes of varying sizes dot the area. The vegetation is essentially Subarctic in character; the principal forest trees at the eastern end of the lake being white and black spruce, poplar, and, to a much lesser extent, white birch. The trees are small, and large stands are limited to the sheltered valleys. Snowdrift is not far from the treeline which runs south to the southern end of Artillery Lake, nearly reaches Great Slave Lake



FIGURE 1—Map of the Great Slave Lake-Lake Athabasca area showing locations mentioned in the text.

in the vicinity of Fort Reliance, and then extends in a southeasterly direction. It is about a hundred miles directly east of the village to the limit of trees. The ground cover throughout the entire area is heavy, particularly around the village where the trees have been cleared; there is a dense growth of tall grass, fireweed, and raspberry bushes.

The climate of the region is characterized by the seasonal extremes that are typical of much of the interior country in the northwest. The three summer months are usually dry with bright, warm weather. Sometimes it becomes very hot with temperatures between 80 and 90 degrees F. There is snow on the ground from October until April, but it seldom reaches a depth of more than two or three feet. Temperatures below -40 degrees F have been recorded at Fort Resolution, but, generally speaking, the winter temperatures are less extreme than at many points on the prairies farther south. The lake in the vicinity of Snowdrift freezes in early November and is usually clear of ice by the middle of June, sometimes earlier. Often people are still using their outboard motors on the lake when they are using dog-teams on land. The relatively late break-up at the eastern end of the lake appears to be at least partly due to the fact that there are no large rivers entering the lake from the southeast of the mouth of the Taltson and also to the presence of many deep, sheltered channels in this area (Bell, 1929, p. 8-11, 23).

The fauna of the region does not differ in any marked respect from that of northwestern Canada in general. Animals which are of economic significance to the Indians of Snowdrift include the moose (*Alces americanus*), barren-ground caribou (*Rangifer arcticus*), muskrat (*Ondatra zibethica*), beaver (*Castor canadensis*), porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*), hare (*Lepus americanus*), lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), red fox (*Vulpes fulva*), fisher (*Martes pennanti*), arctic fox (*Alopex lagopus*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), mink (*Mustela vison*), marten (*Martes americana*), red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*), wolverine (*Gulo luscus*), and otter (*Lutra canadensis*). The barren-ground caribou and arctic fox seldom come near the village, but they are reasonably plentiful within the hunting and trapping range of the Indians. Fishing is an important economic activity, and the fish most commonly taken are whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*), grayling (*Thymallus signifer*), lake trout (*Cristivomer namaycush*), and northern pike (*Esox lucius*). Birds are of less importance, but the following species are occasionally hunted: Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*), Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*), and Spruce Grouse (*Canachites canadensis*) (much of the above material was taken from Bell, 1929, p. 8-11, 23).

A SUBARCTIC COMMUNITY

The community of Snowdrift is situated at the tip of a point that forms the north shore of a small bay. Less than a mile to the northeast of the village is the mouth of the Snowdrift River. Actually, the river flows into Stark Lake at a point nearly ten miles, by water, from the village. However, the channel which connects Stark Lake and Great Slave Lake is considered to be the mouth of the river (see Figure 3). From a hill, 650 feet in height,

and directly behind the village, an excellent view of the surrounding country is obtained.

From the air, Snowdrift appears as a cluster of some twenty-six log houses nestled at the foot of the hill and strung out along the shore of the lake. The village is dominated by a number of buildings that are the centre of Euro-Canadian functions in the community. Centrally located and facing the beach on the west shore of the point are the buildings of the Hudson's Bay Company, consisting of a store, warehouse, residence for the manager, and a small building which houses the electric power plant. Directly behind this complex of frame structures is a building containing a freezing and storage unit, which is maintained for the community by the Indian Affairs Branch. Residents of the village store caribou meat and other game in this freezer during the summer months. In front of the Hudson's Bay Company store is a dock where barges unload and planes tie up.

Directly north of the buildings mentioned above are a number of cabins constructed by individuals from outside the village, which were intended for use as sports fishing camps. Two large ones have been completed but have never been used as such, but one of them has occasionally served as a dance and meeting hall for the villagers. Five smaller ones are part of a combined mining and tourist camp operated by a man from Toronto. Occasionally over the past five years this camp has been in operation as a base for a mining survey team and as a tourist fishing lodge, although during the summer of 1961 it was closed. Two other fishing lodges are located in the vicinity of Snowdrift, one at the mouth of the Snowdrift River, less than a mile from the village, and the other at the west end of Stark Lake about three miles from the village. Both camps opened for business for the first time during the summer of 1960.

In the southwest corner of the village is the Roman Catholic Mission consisting of a church with residence attached and a small warehouse. Although there has been a church in the Snowdrift area for many years, these buildings were constructed in 1951. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate run the mission, and a priest from Fort Resolution makes periodic visits to the village (*see Figure 2*).

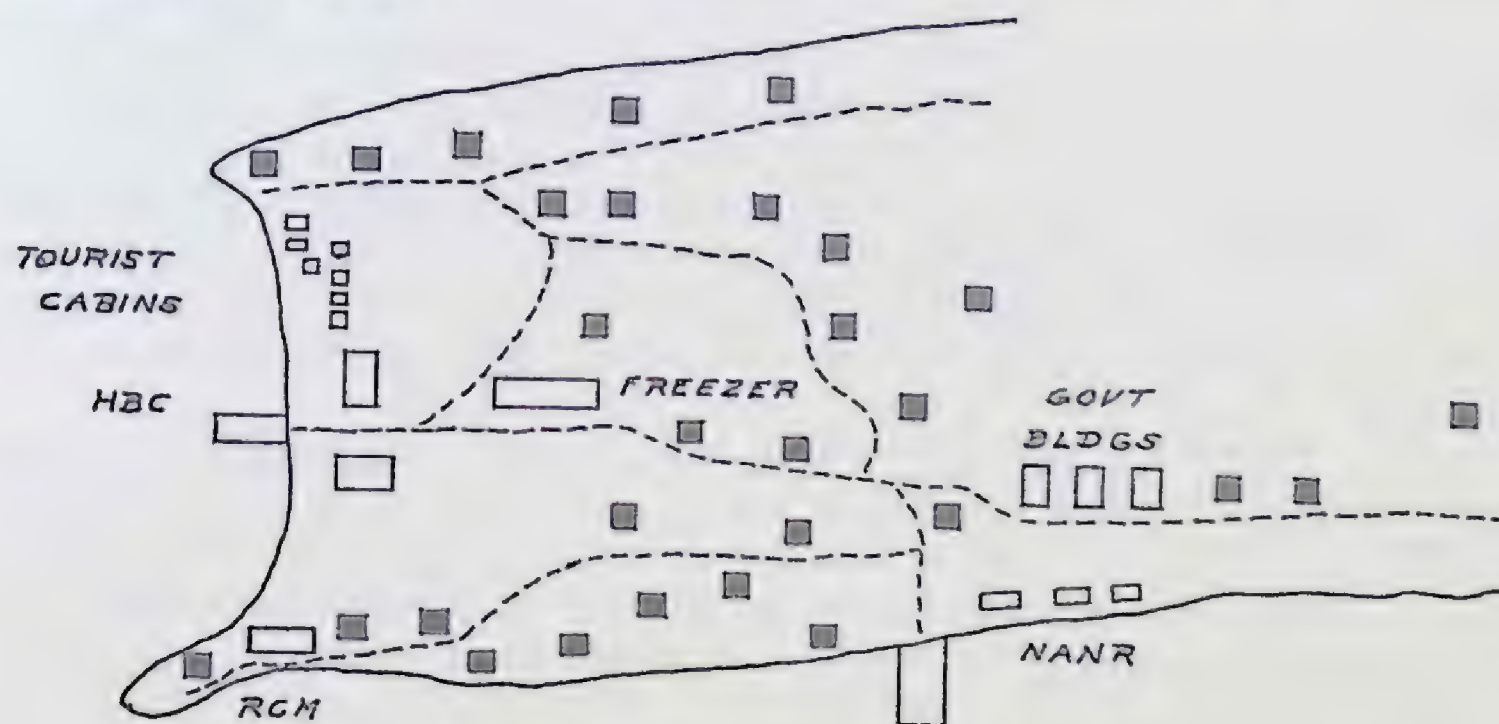


FIGURE 2—Plan of the village of Snowdrift, 1961.

Snowdrift, with a population of approximately 150 individuals in 1961, including 38 children of school age, had no school until the fall of 1960. Prior to 1960 these children were taken out every fall by air to attend schools at Fort Resolution or Fort Smith. During the summer of 1959 a teachers' residence was constructed at the southeast end of the village, and during the summer of 1960 the school buildings and power plant were completed by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. In the vicinity of the school buildings, several government agencies have constructed small cabins for the use of their personnel when they are in the village; these agencies include the Department of Forestry, the Department of Fisheries, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Although relatively isolated, Snowdrift has periodic contacts with other communities in the general area. Approximately one hundred air miles to the west is the cosmopolitan town of Yellowknife, an administrative centre where the area administrator for the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has his headquarters, as does the agent of the Indian Affairs Branch whose territory includes Snowdrift. The community has no scheduled air service, but charter flights from Yellowknife are fairly common, particularly during the summer. Flights to the village from Fort Smith and Hay River are also fairly frequent. During the summer months, planes usually bring government personnel, Hudson's Bay Company employees, or sports fishermen. Since there is no post office in the village, the Hudson's Bay Company manager collects the letters and gives them to the pilot of a charter flight on arrival. Mail coming into the village must come from the central post office at Yellowknife, but usually any plane takes outgoing mail. A daily radio schedule is maintained with Fort Resolution by the Hudson's Bay Company.

It is an easy three-day trip to Yellowknife by outboard powered boat and about the same by dog-team. Villagers occasionally make the trip to seek employment, to trade furs, or to visit relatives. Indians seldom travel by plane except when going out to the hospitals at Fort Smith, Fort Rae, Yellowknife, or Edmonton.

Approximately a hundred miles to the northeast of Snowdrift is the small community of Fort Reliance. In 1960 there were three Indian families permanently living there, two of which moved to Snowdrift in 1961. However, several Snowdrift families spend part of the year in Fort Reliance, which may be considered an extension of Snowdrift since it is within the subsistence area of village residents. Fort Reliance, which is the site of a small Department of Transport signal station, was formerly the headquarters for a Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment, but the post was closed during the winter of 1960-61, and the personnel were transferred to Fort Resolution.

During the summer months Snowdrift is served occasionally by supply barges coming from Fort Smith and Hay River. The Hudson's Bay Company supply ship comes once a year, and during the summer of 1960 three barges brought supplies for the construction of the school. Commercial fishing boats carry out sporadic operations at the eastern end of the lake in summer, and their crews make frequent visits to the village for diversion and to hire villagers for work on the boats. In 1960 there were many such visits, but

fishing was confined to more westerly parts of the lake in 1961, and no boats visited the village until early fall. Sports fishermen in privately owned boats are also frequent visitors during the summer months.

Although far removed from the centres of population at the west end of Great Slave Lake and along the Mackenzie River, Snowdrift is not a socially isolated community, particularly during the summer months. Every plane brings news from the outside. Frequent radio contact means that emergency medical assistance is usually only a few hours away. However, radios and aeroplanes are not always dependable, and when mechanical difficulties render the former useless, or inclement weather makes it impossible for planes to fly, the isolation of the community is virtually complete. Since all planes coming into Snowdrift must land on skis or floats, there are extensive periods during freeze-up and again during break-up when planes cannot land at the village.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Dimension

Since the early history of Chipewyan distribution and of its relationship to the fur trade is well documented, a brief sketch, with emphasis on particular historical developments in the Great Slave Lake area, is all that is necessary here. The major emphasis will be on placing the present-day settlement patterns in the Snowdrift area in their proper historical perspective.¹

The original centre of Chipewyan Indian distribution during prehistoric times was the Peace River area, and the movements and wanderings that have since taken place were closely connected with the westward advance of the Cree at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. After successfully repelling the Cree from the Peace River country, the Chipewyan spread to the lower Peace River. Certain sub-groups occupied the country along the Slave River and around Lake Athabasca; others occupied the upper Churchill River. Still another group was attracted to the coast of Hudson Bay by the newly established Prince of Wales Fort. Cut off from the south at the very beginning of their expansion, the Chipewyan gradually took over the whole of the southern Barren Grounds. It appears that about the middle of the eighteenth century the Chipewyan and Eskimos fought over the possession of Barren Ground territory, and the Eskimos, who usually lost because they did not yet possess firearms, were gradually driven northwards. It is significant that Samuel Hearne was able to make his journey to the vicinity of the Dubawnt River and back to Churchill without meeting any Eskimos. Since Hearne's time, the Chipewyan have withdrawn to the treeline, possibly because of the cessation of pressure from the Cree in the south, and the Eskimos have once again taken over some Barren Ground territory. Today the Chipewyan seldom penetrate north of the treeline except for brief hunting and trapping excursions; Snowdrift is their northernmost settlement (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 13-15; Mackenzie, 1801, p. cxvii; Richardson, 1851, vol. 2, p. 3-6; Tyrrell, 1916, p. 128-32).

It was after the Hudson's Bay Company established its post at Churchill in 1717 that the Chipewyan, supplied with firearms, not only drove the Eskimos north, but oppressed two of the Athapaskan tribes in the northwest (the Yellowknife and the Dogrib) by preventing them from making the trip to the trading post and by forcing them to exchange their furs for only a small part of their actual value in European goods (Jenness, 1958, p. 385-86). Since this situation was unsatisfactory to the Hudson's Bay Company, one of the purposes in the mind of Moses Norton, the chief factor at Prince of Wales Fort, when he conceived the idea of an overland expedition

¹Unless otherwise specified, such phrases as 'today,' and 'at present,' refer to the period of my field-work: 1960-61.

to the Coppermine River, was to bring the 'Far Indians,' as those Athapaskans northwest of Chipewyan territory were called, into the trade at Churchill. As previously mentioned, the Chipewyan had been acting as middlemen, supplying the 'Far Indians' with European goods. It was felt that if direct contact could be established with these Indians, new incentives might be released and more intensive trapping (Rich, 1960, vol. 2, p. 47) would be brought about by a greater desire for trade goods.

The stage was now set for the three expeditions of Samuel Hearne, on the last of which, carried out from 1769 to 1772, he was successful in reaching the mouth of the Coppermine River. Hearne's report is notable not only as the account of a truly amazing piece of exploration, but as a mine of information on the Chipewyan Indians with whom he travelled. He and his party reached Great Slave Lake in late December of 1771, and they probably crossed it in the vicinity of the narrowest part just before the lake opens up into the east arm (Christie Bay). Camsell believed that the crossing brought Hearne and his party to the south side of the lake somewhere near the Taltson River (Hearne, 1958, p. 144; Camsell, 1916, p. 7). The expedition then proceeded south, and in March 1772 it spent several days at Hill Island Lake waiting out a storm. From there the progress was in a generally easterly direction back to Churchill (Hearne, 1958, p. 182).

Following the explorations of Hearne, attention began to be centred on the northwest as a potentially fertile field for the development of the fur trade. In 1778 a number of traders in the Saskatchewan country pooled their surplus goods and dispatched Peter Pond with four canoes up the Churchill River. On the Athabasca River, 40 miles from Lake Athabasca, he established a post and spent the winter trading with the Cree and the Chipewyan. Peter Pond was thus the first white man to take trade goods to the Chipewyan Indians (Campbell, 1957, p. 9). The extension of the fur trade to Great Slave Lake took place shortly after Pond's successful winter on the Athabasca River. The famous trader Cuthbert Grant, together with Laurent Leroux, built a post for the Northwest Company on the Slave River near its mouth in 1786. A few years later the traders moved their post to Moose Deer Island, a few miles from the old site. The Hudson's Bay Company had constructed a post in the vicinity at about the same time, and at the time of the union of the two companies in 1821 this post was called Fort Resolution (Bryce, 1904, p. 387-88).

It was the establishment of Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca by Joseph Frobisher in 1788 that enabled some of the Chipewyan Indians to trade in the west rather than make the long trip to Churchill. Fort Chipewyan was founded as part of the preparations for Alexander Mackenzie's famous voyage which was begun the following year. Fort Wedderburne was established by the Hudson's Bay Company shortly afterwards on an island opposite the Northwest Company's post, but the former was abandoned after the union of 1821 (Rich, 1960, vol. 2, p. 380).

In 1781 a severe smallpox epidemic killed a great number of Chipewyan: as much as 90 per cent of the total population died, according to Hearne (1958, p. 115). Henceforth it is difficult to find reliable population estimates for the tribe, as most of the primary sources provide conflicting information. According to Franklin, there were about 450 trappers who

traded their furs at the various posts on Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake in 1821 (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 241-42). Petitot tells us that disease and starvation continued to reduce the population. There were 900 Chipewyan trading into Fort Chipewyan in 1862, but in 1879 there were only 537. This latter figure probably includes those Indians who traded at Fort Smith after it was established in 1874 (Petitot, 1885, p. 51-52; n.d., p. 296-97). Curtis estimated a total Chipewyan population of slightly over 1,500 in 1924 (Curtis, 1928, vol. 18, p. 147), and, in spite of a rather severe influenza epidemic in the west in 1929, the Census of Indians in Canada for 1954 reports approximately the same number.

After the two expeditions of Franklin in 1819-22 and 1825-27, there was relatively little exploration in the Great Slave Lake area. During the summer of 1833 the east end of the lake was first charted and explored by Captain George Back and his party. After an ascent of the Hoarfrost River, the party wintered at Fort Reliance and then followed the Back River to the sea the following summer, returning again to Fort Reliance for part of the winter of 1834-35. They did not, however, explore south of McLeod Bay in Great Slave Lake (Back, 1836). Until 1921, when G. H. Blanchet began his surveys of the lake for the Topographical Branch of the Department of the Interior, Captain Back's chart was still the only authority for the shape of the eastern end of the lake. Blanchet's surveys were completed in 1925, and Great Slave Lake was accurately mapped for the first time (Blanchet, 1926).

For the purpose of this study it is of interest to trace the expansion of trading operations in the Great Slave Lake area because of its important effect on settlement patterns in the region. The Northwest Company had a post at Fond-du-Lac on the north shore of Lake Athabasca in the early years of the nineteenth century, which was apparently closed by the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of the union in 1821 and then re-established in 1849. Hay River is another very old post, dating back to the early years of the nineteenth century, and Fort Providence at the west end of Great Slave Lake was established by the Mackenzie expedition in 1789. Stoney River (formerly called Black River) was maintained by the Hudson's Bay Company as an outpost of Fond-du-Lac, at least as early as 1923, and it was given post status in 1934. Rocher River was an outpost of Fort Resolution in 1923 and became a post some time between 1931 and 1933. The Snowdrift post was established in 1925, and stores in Yellowknife and Uranium City were opened in 1938 and 1952 respectively.¹ The establishment of each one of these posts resulted in a shift in the settlement patterns of the local Indians. The total population of the area became segmented and drawn within the sphere of influence of the different posts.

With this information in mind, the history of Snowdrift and the movements of the people who eventually came to be permanent residents of the community will now be examined.

The physical existence of Snowdrift in its present form goes back no more than five or six years. However, the area has been a focal point for residents of the surrounding region for at least thirty-five years and possibly

¹The author wishes to express his appreciation to Mrs. Shirlee A. Smith, Librarian, Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, for information concerning the dates of establishment for the various posts on Lake Athabasca and Great Slave Lake.

much longer. As recently as 1951 the church and many houses were located on a point about two miles southwest of the present village, while the Hudson's Bay Company was the only occupant of the present site. Around 1954 most families built houses on the present site or moved their old houses from other localities in the vicinity. This was apparently done in response to suggestions made by the Agency Superintendent who pointed out that in the future an increasing number of whites would be coming into the area and that it would be a good idea for the Indians to have their own village, an area that would be considered as theirs. Other factors were also involved, some of which will be discussed in detail later.

In order to understand the significance of the concentration of people in the Snowdrift area it is necessary to go back to a period before the Hudson's Bay Company established its post. Prior to this time the population of the eastern end of Great Slave Lake consisted of an unknown number of Chipewyan families who hunted, fished, and trapped throughout the area and moved about the country as single families or in groups of families. Most families traded periodically at Fort Resolution and considered that community to be their trading centre. The Hudson's Bay Company occasionally sent a large canoe loaded with items to trade into the country around the present community of Snowdrift. In 1925, as previously mentioned, the Company established a post at Snowdrift, probably in response to competition from free traders. Since the latter were self employed, they left no records, and it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine where they located and how long they stayed. In fact, some were highly mobile with outfits consisting simply of a boat loaded with trade items. These traders intercepted the Indians who were on their way to the trading post at Fort Resolution and in this way cut off some of the Company's business. The existence of a post at Snowdrift allowed the Company to compete directly with the free traders. The size and wealth of the Company drove many of the free traders out of business or to another location. As a matter of fact, there was a free trader in the Snowdrift area for many years who operated successfully, even in competition with the Company, until about 1948 when his store burned. It is significant that the free trader was unable to recover from this fire, whereas a year or two later the Company rebuilt immediately after its store burned.

The immediate result of the establishment of a Hudson's Bay Company post at Snowdrift was that the Indians living in the area who had previously traded at Fort Resolution now found it convenient to bring their furs to Snowdrift. People who had been within the sphere of influence of other trading centres to the south were also affected. Chipewyan families who normally hunted and trapped in the area between Snowdrift and Lake Athabasca and traded into such centres as Fond-du-Lac, Stony Rapids, Fort Smith, and Fort Fitzgerald found that it was more convenient for them to trade at the Snowdrift post (*see Figure 1*). One informant, whose parents had come to Snowdrift from Uranium City in 1948, told the writer that his family had hunted and trapped in the area immediately to the south of Snowdrift and that many times they had visited the post and finally decided to shift the centre of their movements from Uranium City to Snowdrift. Another informant, who was born at Fort Fitzgerald, said that his father

used to trap northeast of that village into the Nonacho Lake area. There were thirty-two portages on his route, and the great distances involved made travelling difficult even in winter. He came to Snowdrift at about the time the Hudson's Bay Company opened the post and thereafter traded there, and because he did not have to go so far with his furs trapping was made much easier.

The following detailed account of the trapping activities of a man who formerly lived in Fort Fitzgerald, and who, in the years following the season described, shifted his centre of operations to Snowdrift, will illustrate why the latter area was a strategic location for a new Hudson's Bay Company post. In August of 1941 the informant left Fort Fitzgerald with his father and paddled into the Taltson River country near Nonacho Lake. They arrived in mid-September, did some fishing, and killed a moose. They had brought nine dogs with them, and after freeze-up they moved east to Tejean Lake and then to Porter Lake where there was good fishing through the ice. They trapped the Porter Lake area until Christmas when they moved to Sparks Lake. Here caribou were plentiful during February, and the trapping was good. In March they travelled to the Thekulthili River and from there to Hill Island Lake in mid-April where they met a white trapper who traded them some food for furs. About the 15th of May the informant left his father and went back to Nonacho Lake to get the canoe. He met many people on the Taltson River. Picking up the canoe, he returned to Hill Island Lake where he met his father, and they returned to Fort Fitzgerald by way of Donovan Lake in late June. The two men stayed in Fort Fitzgerald all that summer, and in the fall of 1942 they went to Salkeld Lake where the informant's father had a cabin and where the fishing was good. Next they went to trap in the area between Sparks Lake and Halliday Lake, staying until mid-March of 1943 when they headed for Snowdrift by dog-team (see Figure 3). That year the family decided to stay in the Snowdrift area because it was closer to their trapping area, because the fishing was very good, and because the family had relatives in the area.

By way of summary, it may be said that the people who altered their trading centre when a Hudson's Bay post was constructed at Snowdrift in 1925 were those who originally traded their furs at Fort Resolution or at one of the communities to the south and southwest, mentioned previously. They shifted their centre of activity to Snowdrift either because the trapping, hunting, and fishing were better in the area, because they had relatives who had already moved to the vicinity of the new post, or because they found that they did not have to go so far to trade their furs. It follows then that the genealogical connections of the Snowdrift people outside the village are mostly to the south and southwest. Because these places cannot be reached easily, contact is not usually maintained with relatives. Closer contacts are maintained with Fort Resolution and Rocher River since they are easily accessible.

It is important to realize that, although the Snowdrift post quickly collected a large number of families who were dependent on it for trading their furs, the community as it exists today is a very recent phenomenon. In fact, the families who traded at Snowdrift probably spent no more time in the vicinity of the post than did the Fort Fitzgerald family whose trapping activities have



FIGURE 3—Map of the region around Snowdrift.

just been discussed. One informant said that until 1952 he lived with his brothers and father in a cabin at the south end of Artillery Lake. They would come to Snowdrift only during July and August to trade their furs and receive the treaty payment. In the treaty report for 1949, the Agency Superintendent was impressed with the small number of log cabins at Snowdrift and thought that the Indian Affairs Branch might supply lumber and other materials in order to encourage families to build permanent homes. In July of 1951 the treaty party found only a small number of families camped in

the vicinity of the Snowdrift post, a much larger population being camped on Murky Channel, about fifteen miles southwest of the post. The reasons for the recent concentration of a permanent population around the Hudson's Bay Company store will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Making a Living

THE YEARLY CYCLE

Autumn — The major autumn activity for the people of Snowdrift is fishing. Of prime importance too is the winter's supply of dog food which must be obtained at this time. Although the caribou hunting sometimes lasts until the end of September or even into October, most families like to be back in the village by the 15th of September, which is the commonly accepted date for the beginning of autumn fishing. In recent years this would be about the date when school children are transported to schools at Fort Resolution and Fort Smith.

The good autumn fishing begins when the lake trout and whitefish start to ascend the rivers to spawn. Some men set their nets near the mouth of the Snowdrift River, and others fish at various places in Stark Lake, particularly near the second mouth of the river where it flows into the lake. Those who fish in Stark Lake, near the far mouth of the river, camp there until they have secured their supply of winter dog food. It is not uncommon for one man to set as many as five nets at one time and take more than a hundred fish in a day. The fish caught at this time of the year are placed on a raised platform until it is cold enough to store them in a tent or warehouse for the winter. The cache consists of four poles placed upright in the ground in the form of a square with a framework of light poles across the top. Beneath these poles hang forked sticks on which the fish are hung. Trout have the fork slipped through their gills, and the whitefish, because they have soft mouths, have it inserted through the tail. The fish are not cleaned since it is sufficiently cool to preserve them until freeze-up. Lake trout and whitefish are the most common varieties caught, but some grayling and northern pike are also taken. The latter is not considered a good dog food because it is not fat. Whitefish are very much preferred for human consumption, and many are taken with that purpose in mind. Although most fishermen place their nets as previously indicated, some or near the shores of one of the many islands in the vicinity.

prefer to fish in Great Slave Lake and set their nets in front of the village

According to Birket-Smith (1930, p. 28), nets were formerly made of willow bass, which was knotted under water to prevent it from becoming dry. Netting needles were unknown, and the work was done entirely by hand. According to Hearne, however, aboriginal nets were made of fine babiche, which rotted easily unless the nets were taken out of the water frequently and dried (Hearne, 1958, fn. p. 170). Today the nets for autumn and summer fishing are made of nylon or cotton. They are about thirty to forty feet in length and three to four feet wide, although some

fishermen prefer nets of greater width, even as wide as twelve feet. The nets are anchored at each end by a large rock. For weight, small stones are placed along the bottom of the net, and blocks of wood or commercially made floats run along the top. At one end of the net a piece of wood is fastened. This floats on the surface and indicates where the net is set since the floats are not always on the surface of the water. In bringing in the net, the rock and floating stick are brought into the boat, and the net is then coiled into a large metal tub. In setting it, the same procedure is followed in reverse; the fisherman manoeuvres his canoe so that the net plays out smoothly from the tub.

Pointed bone spears, antler gorge hooks, and fish weirs have been used extensively in the past throughout Chipewyan territory (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 26-27; Curtis, 1928, p. 20), but nets are the only means of taking fish at Snowdrift today. Reliable figures for the amount of fish taken during the autumn are difficult to obtain. However, an estimated 75,000 pounds were taken during October, November, and December of 1958.

At the same time that autumn fishing is in progress, firewood is being gathered for the winter. There is an attempt to get a large supply in before freeze-up. Short trips are made by canoe to areas where there are stands of dead trees. Since wood is used as fuel for cooking and heating in all village houses, large amounts are required. The men leave their families for varying periods during the trapping season, and they like to have a supply of firewood on hand before their departure.

In addition to fishing and wood gathering, ducks are shot in autumn near the village. Mallards, Pintails, and Canada Geese are common varieties. Most are eaten immediately, but some are frozen for winter use.

Winter and Spring—These two seasons are considered together because they are the trapping time of the year, and, since all other local subsistence activities are of a more or less subsidiary nature, the Indians think of the trapping period as a single unit. Trapping begins officially on the first of November when the season for most fur-bearing animals opens. Marten, mink, lynx, fisher, otter, and ermine can be taken after that date, as can both arctic white and coloured fox, south of the treeline. The season for beaver and fox north of the treeline begins on November 16. The problem of enforcing the trapping season is not a relevant one since, for the most part, the fur is not in prime marketable condition except during the season.

The area utilized by Snowdrift trappers is bounded on the north by Walmsley and Clinton-Colden lakes, on the east by Whitefish Lake, on the south by the southern Taltson River – Nonacho Lake area, and on the west by the Doubling Lake – Meander Lake region (see Figure 3). This is a large area, but the majority of trappers do not trap to peripheries of the region. Only one man, for example, traps north of Narrow Lake in the Doubling Lake – Meander Lake area, and in recent years few trappers have extended their activities as far north as Clinton-Colden Lake or as far east as Whitefish Lake. In fact, very few trappers operate beyond the tree-line. During the winter of 1959-60, when white fox prices were relatively high and the animals few in the wooded country, only three men trapped in the Barren Grounds. Most men do a large part of their trapping within a

radius of sixty-five to eighty miles of the village, and the Taltson River – Nonacho Lake area is the centre of concentration. Other areas are also important, however, and some trappers are wide ranging. One informant told of having a cabin at the east end of the Douglas Peninsula and of trapping on the peninsula during the winter of 1959–60 and in the Lauson Lake – Tochatwi Lake area until Christmas. At that time he returned to Snowdrift for about a month and then crossed the lake to Bedford Creek and trapped in the Bedford Lake – Goodspeed Lake area until spring. Another informant trapped east of Fort Reliance into the Barren Grounds through Sandy Lake to Whitefish Lake but mostly in the area immediately to the east of Whitefish Lake. When there were no foxes in this area, he worked his way west again down the Snowdrift River where he trapped for mink on Tent Lake. He then went back to Fort Reliance and returned to Snowdrift by way of the portages and Stark Lake (*see* Figure 3). He made this trip in the two months previous to Christmas and a similar one after remaining in the village during the first three weeks of January. The good white fox prices that have prevailed for the past two years will possibly encourage more trappers to move out into the Barren Grounds where this animal is more plentiful. During the summers of 1960 and 1961 a number of men talked of shifting their trapping activities to the northeast, but all seemed disturbed by the expense of outfitting for that area and the necessity of having a good dog-team.

It is probably true that in most years the majority of Snowdrift men trap alone, although there are numerous exceptions to this rule. Among the younger unmarried men, two individuals will occasionally trap together, particularly if neither has enough equipment to carry out the operation alone. In cases of this kind there is pooling of equipment, but each trapper sets his own traps and claims only those animals which he himself takes. Other combinations of trappers sometimes involve brothers, a man and his father-in-law, a man and his brother-in-law, or a father and son. But most men would prefer to trap alone. When informants described trapping partnerships, they nearly always gave lack of equipment as the reason for the partnership and projected into the future to a time when they would have young dogs, or a new sled, or enough money for supplies, and would be able to trap by themselves.¹

The length of time that the trappers stay away from the village varies considerably. As previously indicated, some men, particularly young ones or those without family responsibilities, go out in the late fall, return for Christmas, perhaps staying several weeks, then go out again and return only late in the spring. However, a much larger number return frequently to trade furs and obtain supplies. One informant who traps in the Nonacho Lake – Taltson River area said that he stayed out about two weeks and then returned to trade. He maintained that he had to trade his furs frequently in order to obtain more credit and to leave supplies for his family while he was away. He realized that the main difficulty with this procedure was that he spent a great deal of time travelling. He wished that his family could travel with him, but he was aware that this was impossible with small children.

¹For a description of a similar, although more institutionalized, economic relationship among the Slave Indians of the Upper Mackenzie Region, *see* Helm, 1961, p. 80–81.

Some men who have only older children will take their families into the bush with them thus avoiding the need to return to the village at frequent intervals. Many families were unenthusiastic when they learned that a federal school would be constructed at Snowdrift since it meant that all the school children would be living at home thus limiting the mobility of many families.

A trapper who expects to trap effectively should have a team of at least four or five dogs, since the total distance he may travel in so doing may be as much as three hundred miles. It may take anywhere from one to three days to reach the point where he wishes to set his traps. Once this point is reached, the trapper moves over his area, sets his traps, and camps at night, usually in a small canvas tent heated with a stove made from an old five-gallon oil can. In mid-winter the days are short, and if the trapper wishes to do all his work during the daylight hours he must be on the trail by 9:00 each morning and be ready to make camp by 3:30 or 4:00 in the afternoon.

Most trappers prefer to set nets at two or three points along their trap-lines so that fish for dog food can be readily obtained. The location of these nets will often also serve as a sort of base camp from which various sections of a trap-line can be visited. Since dogs must have a day of rest after every two or three days of travel, it is sometimes convenient to have a good camping spot with a ready supply of dog food. The trapper welcomes these days of rest not only to give freshly set traps a chance to catch something, but also to provide an opportunity for more intensive hunting than is possible on a regular day of setting and checking traps.

Each trapper has several areas within his trapping range where he is continually checking and setting traps. Usually the traps are checked every three or four days, but when the trapper returns to the village to trade his furs and pick up supplies, the traps are sometimes left set for from two weeks to a month. An area is most effectively trapped when the traps are checked regularly. One section of a trapping area may be more intensively trapped than another if the trapper observes many signs of animals or has particularly good luck in a specific section.

The setting of traps requires considerable care and a knowledge of the habits of the animals. During the winter, the only kinds of sets made are for mink, marten, white fox, lynx, and wolverine. Other animals are sometimes caught in these traps, but since these five animals bring the highest prices, all trapping activity is concentrated on their capture. A trap for mink is set either where a small stream enters a lake or at some point along the shore of a lake. A suitable spot is chosen, and a small spruce is cut off a foot or two above the snow in such a way that the trunk will form an anchor for the trap. Small spruce boughs are placed in a leaning position to form an enclosed area around the trap; toward the rear of this closed area a piece of frozen fish is placed as bait. The steel trap, a No. 1, is placed in such a way that the mink gets caught in it when he makes for the bait. A light covering of snow is placed over the trap so as to partially hide it. In setting a trap for marten, the same procedure is followed; it is only the location that is different. Marten traps are set at any point in the bush where tracks are seen, but preferably where there is a heavy growth of spruce.

In placing a trap for lynx, the trapper selects a spot where there are many lynx and hare tracks. The trap, usually a No. 1½, is fastened either to a small spruce or to a long stick buried in the snow. No bait is used, the trap being simply covered with snow. Lynx can also be taken in snares, and this is perhaps the more common way to trap them. In setting a lynx snare, a noose of rope or wire is suspended from a fallen tree in such a way that a lynx walking through it would be caught. Its struggles would tighten the snare, and death would presumably result from strangulation. A pair of small twigs, stuck vertically in the snow on either side of the noose, help to keep it open.

It is usual to trap white foxes at a place where a caribou has been killed on a lake. The intestines are left, and the traps are set close to them, covered with snow so that the fox will not see them as it approaches the bait. When no caribou carcass is available for bait, the traps may be set on small treeless islands in the middle of lakes, or for that matter at any point on the frozen surface of a lake. The traps are fastened by means of wrapping the chain around a short stick and placing a heavy rock on the stick. Snow packs around it and becomes frozen. The trap is covered over lightly with snow, and chips of frozen fish are scattered all around the area. As the fox walks about eating these small pieces of fish, it steps into the hidden trap.

The wolverine is a very difficult animal to trap, and most trappers would likely not bother trying to take the animal were it not for the fact that wolverines are notorious disturbers of traps set for other animals. It is not uncommon for a trapper to discover that all his traps set in a given area have been disturbed by a wolverine, and this is one of the reasons why traps should be checked as frequently as possible. The longer a trap remains set without being checked, the greater the chance that a wolverine will eventually find it and rob it of its contents. A single animal may follow a trapper's trail for as much as 15 miles, stopping at each trap along the way. In setting a trap for wolverine, a small tree is cut off at a height of about five feet above the snow. At the top is suspended a piece of frozen fish. A No. 3 trap is set at the foot of the tree and fastened to it so that it is completely covered. The wolverine gets caught as he leaps for the bait. A trap for wolverine can be set anywhere the tracks are seen, but it is common to set it near mink or marten sets.

Apart from the disturbance of traps by wolverines, there are other hazards that stand in the way of successful trapping. An animal may spring a trap without being caught, or it may be poorly caught and escape. A mink or marten, if caught only by a toe, will often chew its way free. Valueless animals, or animals of low value, that are frequently taken in traps include hare, weasel, red fox, squirrel, ermine, and even the Ptarmigan and Canada Jay. Although traps are not usually set for otters, these animals are sometimes seen and shot.

It is perhaps possible to obtain a more precise total picture of winter trapping activities by referring to a specific trapping area that was visited by the author and an informant during December 1961. The trap-line began approximately thirty miles from the village and ran for a distance of nearly eighty miles. Over a two-week period, more than two hundred miles were covered in checking and rechecking the traps. The informant set a total of

seventy-two traps and snares, of which fifty-six traps were for mink, four were for marten, and six were for white fox. One trap was set for wolverines, and three traps and two snares were set for lynx. Of this total number, thirty-one were checked only once, twenty-three were checked twice, fourteen three times, and four four times. It only remains to add that the animals taken on this trip included ten mink, two lynx, one white fox, two red fox, one marten, and one silver fox, with a total value of \$230.¹

In spring the main trapping is for muskrat and beaver. The muskrat season opens on the first of March and lasts until the 20th of May, and the beaver season ends on May 10. In trapping beaver, a hole is cut in the ice near the beaver house, and some birch or willow logs are placed vertically through the hole. The trap is placed among the logs on the bottom of the lake and should be checked every three days. After the ice has gone, beaver may be shot as they swim on the surface of the water near their houses. To trap muskrats when the lakes are still frozen, a hole is made in the side of a muskrat house, where the trap is placed, and the hole is covered up again. When there is no ice, the animals are shot from a canoe with a .22 calibre rifle. Most hunters own small canvas-covered ratting canoes for use during the late spring. These canoes are about ten feet in length, pointed at each end and paddled from a kneeling position in the centre. They are extremely light and easy to carry over the portages from one lake to another.

There are a greater number of regulations for the trapping of beaver than for other animals. Most of these do not apply to the Snowdrift Indians, except the rule which makes it illegal to trap more than a certain number of beaver each year. Each trapper must obtain annually a beaver trapping licence, and with it he receives seals which are to be attached to the animals he takes. Indians, however, are not required to pay for a licence, and they receive seals free of charge. The number of seals issued varies from year to year, depending on the size of the local beaver population. It is illegal for a trapper to have in his possession or to use a seal issued to another person, but it is a common practice for those Indians who do not wish to trap beaver to sell their seals to more ambitious villagers. Unused seals are supposed to be returned to the game officer, but more often they find their way into the hands of an energetic trapper who will probably have paid about one dollar each for them. During the spring of 1960, when each trapper was issued five seals, one man sold twenty-five beaver pelts to the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company will not take a pelt without a seal, but it does not attempt to prevent the illegal transference of the seals.

Trappers always have to do a certain amount of hunting because the supplies they take with them from the village are usually meagre and consist of little more than staples. Ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse, and hare are the common fare in a trapper's camp, although moose and caribou are, of course, much preferred. Hare snares are nearly always set as soon as a trapper makes camp. These snares are similar to but smaller than those set for lynx. Ptarmigan and Spruce Grouse can be shot with .22 rifles. The former are particularly plentiful in the spring. Winter moose hunting requires a great

¹The trip referred to here is described in detail in an appendix to this study.

deal of care and a thorough understanding of the habits of the animal. The hunting technique used involves careful tracking similar to that described by Osgood for the Tanaina (Osgood, 1937, p. 34). Both Hearne and Curtis describe methods of hunting moose in which the animal is tracked on snowshoes through deep snow until it tires (Hearne, 1959, p. 182-83; Curtis 1928, p. 15). Today most trappers appear unwilling to spend any length of time tracking a moose but may do so on a day when the dogs are being rested. If a moose should be seen crossing a lake, however, the trapper may make camp immediately and begin following it.

The most important hunting during the winter and spring is for caribou. Some men feel very strongly that their dogs should be fed on it during the winter, especially when they are being used on the trap-line. Thus, there are some trappers who will not set nets while they are on the line but will spend time hunting instead of trapping. When they are unsuccessful, they must feed their dogs flour or cereal from their own food supply, and they therefore run out of food rapidly and must return to the village for supplies. It seems certain that, for many trappers, looking for caribou is the most important thing they do on the trap-line, and it always takes precedence over trapping. Some men are even unwilling to leave the village if no caribou have been reported in the area where they trap. Caribou are most frequently killed when they are surprised crossing a large lake. The Indians seldom attempt to track them through the bush. For hunting moose and caribou, high-powered rifles are used, the most popular calibres being .30-.30 or .25-.35, but some men own .303's.

As previously mentioned, the trapper sets nets under the ice for whitefish and lake trout as soon as he makes camp. To set such a net, a number of holes must be made, and the net is propelled from one hole to the other by means of a spring attached to a wooden frame about five feet long. The position of the net under the ice is indicated by sticks placed upright at either end. At one end of the net a long string is attached. The net is then drawn out through a hole at the opposite end, and the fish are removed. Then the string is pulled, and the net is once more in place under the ice.

The existence of clearly defined family trapping territories among the Chipewyan appears to be the subject of some dispute. At least two early observers believed that these territories did exist (Seton, 1920, p. 150-51; Penard, 1929, p. 21), but the evidence collected at Snowdrift does not support the theory of family trapping territories. Most informants stated that they had learned to trap in one of the areas trapped by their fathers, and that afterwards they often continued trapping in the area. However, few trappers could be found who trapped more than five years in any single area. Two or three years was the average length of time, depending on how successful the trapper was in a particular locality. Some trappers had trapped at one time or another throughout most of the area within a one-hundred-mile radius of the village. As stated previously, the fact that white fox prices were relatively high during 1959 and 1960 has encouraged several individuals to shift their trapping operations to the Barren Grounds. During the winter of 1961, one trapper changed his trapping area in the middle of the season because he felt that the snow was too deep in the region where he had been trapping.

The local attitude toward fixed trapping territories is reflected in the reception given the suggestion that all the Snowdrift trappers register their trap-lines. They were against the idea when it was introduced by the Agency Superintendent on the grounds that it would restrict the movements of the trappers and limit the number of trappers who could exploit a particular area. Then too, the problem of trap-lines that crossed one another would be difficult to reconcile under registration. Most Indians felt that registration would simply get them into trouble with other people and would be difficult to enforce without going to court. It would seem, then, that the opposition to trap-line registration is an indication that the Snowdrift trappers desire freedom to determine for themselves where the trapping is best.

There can be no doubt that the total area trapped by Snowdrift residents has been steadily shrinking in recent years, particularly since the Indians began to live permanently around the Snowdrift trading post. Another important factor has been the increase in government services which has reduced, to some extent, the reliance on income derived from trapping. The payment of the family allowance on a monthly basis has doubtless been one of the most significant factors of this kind. Wage employment, though limited at present, will, if it increases, have a similar effect, as will the establishment of a federal school in the village.

It is equally certain that the area around Snowdrift is not being trapped so effectively as it might be, and this is largely due to the fact that developing tendencies toward a secondary community life are not compatible with the semi-sedentary routine that is required for effective trapping. With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why trapping is becoming increasingly unpopular with the Snowdrift Indians. It is a very hard life carried out under extreme climatic conditions and unpredictable in its rewards. Not only are there the long, hard, slow trips by dog-team along the trap-lines in all kinds of weather, but there is still camp to be made when, cold and tired, one arrives at a camping place. The tent and stove must be set up, wood cut, the dogs unharnessed and fed, and perhaps a net checked. Then a meal must be prepared, followed by a long, lonely evening in an unevenly heated tent. When this kind of life is contrasted with the comfortable, gregarious life in the village, it is little wonder that the men do not stay long on the trap-lines. In fact, during the prime trapping period, which extends from about the first of November until Christmas, most of the village trappers are on their trap-lines for no more than four weeks. In recent years there has been only a moderate amount of trapping after Christmas. The value of mink and marten pelts drops rapidly after the first of the year, and only white fox pelts continue to be in prime condition. Thus there is relatively little trapping activity until muskrat and beaver trapping begins in the spring.

During the winter of 1959-60 there were thirty-eight trappers trading into the post at Snowdrift. Of these, thirty-five were actual residents of the village, one was a full-time resident at Fort Reliance and two have since moved to Yellowknife. Of the twenty-six households in the village, consisting for the most part of nuclear families, thirteen have one active trapper, eight have two, and two have three; three families have no active trappers. There are five young men over the age of eighteen who apparently did not trap

during 1959-60, but who represent potential trappers, although one of them is partially disabled. It could also be that the animals trapped by these young men were included in the totals of other trappers in the family. On the basis of figures compiled after June 30, 1960, the distribution of trapping income was as follows:

<i>Income</i>	<i>Number of Trappers</i>
Under \$100	10
\$100-\$199	5
\$200-\$299	5
\$300-\$399	8
\$400-\$499	1
\$500-\$599	4
\$600-\$699	1
\$700-\$799	2
\$800-\$899	1
Over \$900	1
<i>Total</i>	<u>38</u>

The same data, when considered on the basis of the household membership of the trappers, yield the following information:

<i>Household</i>	<i>Trapping Income</i>	<i>Number of Trappers in Household</i>
A	\$ 232.74	1
B	41.02	1
C	290.25	1
D	458.55	2
E	487.60	3
F	1,390.00	2
G	516.85	2
H	96.95	1
I	480.90	2
J	293.75	1
K	948.23	3
L	550.50	2
M	650.40	2
N	1,068.40	1
O	527.40	1
P	71.00	1
Q	144.25	1
R	393.20	2
S	732.00	1
T	401.70	1
U	701.50	1
V	363.45	1
W	445.20	2
<i>Total</i>	<u>\$11,285.84</u>	<u>35</u>

The centre of the fur trapping activity at Snowdrift, and of almost all economic activities for that matter, is the Hudson's Bay Company. The store is a compact one-room structure with a side room for the manager's office and an attic for storage. It is well stocked with general merchandise.

In the food line there are canned meats, vegetables, jam, peanut butter, and so on, as well as such staples as lard, flour, tea, coffee, milk, and baking powder. A complete line of clothing is carried since the residents of Snowdrift purchase most of their clothes. Dishes, stoves, rifles, radios, record players, outboard motors, and large amounts of tobacco and candy are also sold. Items such as watches, cameras, cheap jewelry, and sun glasses are an important part of the inventory, and patent medicines, phonograph records, guitars, sleeping bags, tents, and gasoline are stocked.

Before going into the bush, a trapper normally receives a certain amount of credit at the store, based upon his past trapping record and the expectancy of his future catch. This will be enough to provide him with the necessities for an extended period on the trap-line if he so desires. The Company is careful about the credit it extends, but occasionally some individuals do run up large debts. In 1960 there were four or five individuals whose debts amounted to as much as \$400. Most of these large debts appear to have been the result of a sudden and unexpected lack of success in trapping, particularly in that of white foxes. A man will, on the basis of past successes, obtain a large grub stake, go out and bring in many foxes, and then get a further and even larger advance and go out again. This continues until suddenly the trapper has no success at all and finds himself with a large debt. Since a large debt is very discouraging to the individual involved, the Company will often cancel as much as half of it after a period of time in order to encourage the debtor to pay the rest. For purposes of advancing credit, the Snowdrift store keeps a file on all the men in the village, which contains information as to their skill as trappers and their reliability. This file has been compiled over many years by previous post managers.

The following figures represent the prices paid for various furs by the Company at Snowdrift during the fiscal year 1959-69. They represent the highest and lowest figures paid for pelts of top size and grade. It should be kept in mind that many, if not most, of the furs obtained are of less than top size and grade.

<i>Animal</i>	<i>Highest Price</i>	<i>Lowest Price</i>
Beaver	\$25.00	\$13.00
Muskrat	.90	.50
Cross fox	3.00	
Red fox	2.00	
Silver fox	2.00	
White fox	40.00	32.00
Blue fox	15.00	12.00
Marten	12.50	
Mink	20.50	16.50 and lower
Fisher	25.00	
Lynx	22.00	12.75
Otter	30.00	21.65
Ermine	1.20	.96
Squirrel	.42	.36
Timber wolf	10.00	
Arctic wolf	20.00	
Prairie wolf	4.00	
Wolverine	18.00	
Skunk	1.00	
Caribou	3.00 (approximate)	

It will be noted that although there is only one price for many of the fur-bearing animals, the prices paid for the more valuable ones, particularly for white fox and beaver, varied considerably during the course of the year.

Another set of figures that is of particular interest represents the numbers of pelts of various animals purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company at Snowdrift for three fiscal years, 1957-58, 1958-59, and 1959-60, plus the prices paid for these pelts. These figures illustrate clearly the extensive fluctuation from year to year not only in the number of animals taken but in the prices paid by the Company. This is particularly noticeable with regard to white fox, ermine, and muskrat.

<i>Animal</i>	<i>Number Taken</i>			<i>Total Price Paid</i>		
	<i>1957-58</i>	<i>1958-59</i>	<i>1959-60</i>	<i>1957-58</i>	<i>1958-59</i>	<i>1959-60</i>
Beaver	46	71	110	\$ 336.00	\$ 671.50	\$ 1,158.95
Ermine	76	106	184	39.90	34.15	86.05
Blue fox	1	2	1	4.50	9.00	12.50
Red fox	20	13	12	32.30	23.05	46.15
Cross fox	3	6	4	6.80	12.10	21.40
White fox	151	136	16	2,517.50	2,512.00	482.50
Lynx	2	4	25	14.50	19.00	282.25
Marten	106	166	513	764.60	952.00	3,153.95
Mink	143	194	440	2,538.25	3,584.75	7,156.10
Muskrat	3,069	3,771	1,883	1,427.96	2,143.37	1,137.36
Otter	8	10	14	188.00	199.00	280.30
Squirrel	1,245	1,496	1,302	387.00	357.71	369.02
Timber wolf		1			1.75	
<i>Total</i>				\$8,257.31	\$10,519.38	\$14,186.53

It is probably safe to say that the majority of Indians at Snowdrift are dissatisfied with the services provided by the Hudson's Bay Company, particularly with regard to the handling of furs. Most Indians feel that the prices received for furs in the village are always low, while the same furs bring very high prices when disposed of in the urban centres to the south. There seems to be no knowledge or understanding of the various price mechanisms that are operative with regard to the trading of furs. The Indians cannot understand why the prices fluctuate so much, and they are often bewildered to find that the prices may even have gone down while they were in the bush. They go out thinking they are going to get one price for their furs, but when they return they find that quite a different price is in effect. Also, most informants think that the Company must be 'crazy' to raise the price paid for a particular fur having once bought it at a lower price. The general opinion is that the Company is taking advantage of the fact that the Indians have nowhere else to trade.

There is a tendency to hold the manager personally responsible for whatever complaints an individual may have about the Hudson's Bay Company. It is not generally realized that the manager, for the most part, acts as directed by official Company policy. A manager cannot possibly be considered 'good' unless he 'helps the people when they are in need'; in other words, extends credit. He is thus judged by the extent to which credit can be wheedled out of him. Very often a manager's reputation for being 'good' will grow after he has left the post. The Indians may have complained about him when he was in the village, but in retrospect he is thought of as being 'better' than

his replacement. Although a general credit policy is laid down by the Company, it can be leniently or rigidly applied over the years by different managers. And a given manager's opinion of a man as a trapper may be different from that of another manager's, despite the records that are kept as a guide to new managers.

Often the relationship between the Indians and the Company manager might almost be characterized as involving a battle of wits, since the goal of the Indians at all times is to obtain credit, often by fair means or foul. The following is an example of the kind of difficulty that can arise under these circumstances. An informant was working on a commercial fishing boat late in the summer of 1960, and on one of his periodic visits to the village he asked the manager for credit, saying that he was going to make over \$300 before he finished work. He even brought the captain of his boat into the store to verify this statement. On this basis, the manager advanced him \$100 in credit. However, when the informant's cheque arrived, it was for less than \$100 since much of the money that was coming to him he had already spent at the fishing company commissary. Then, when he was trapping the following winter, he gave his furs to someone else to sell in order to postpone the time when he would eventually have to pay his debt to the Company. This sort of thing should not be considered as outright dishonesty, since the debt would have to be paid eventually if the informant could ever expect to get any more credit. However, it illustrates a type of situation that occurs frequently in the village.

The Snowdrift Indians may be uninformed concerning the price mechanisms operative in the fur trade, but there is almost universal knowledge that higher prices are paid for furs when there is more than one store in a village. They know that two stores mean that the traders have to compete for the furs and therefore must pay more. This knowledge seems to arise from the fact that there are two stores in the nearby community of Rocher River. Indians who visit that community note the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company pays higher prices for furs there. Some have been known to obtain credit from the Company in Snowdrift and then sell their furs in Rocher River or Yellowknife.

Fur prices are invariably one of the subjects discussed when the Agency Superintendent visits the community. Many Indians would like to market their furs in the urban centres to the south, and the Superintendent has, on occasion, helped to arrange this kind of transaction. One of the problems in an arrangement of this sort is the paying of the fee for export from the Northwest Territories which in 1960-61 ranged from 2 cents on every muskrat pelt to \$1.25 on each white fox pelt. This fee must be paid prior to the shipment of the furs.

As a concluding comment on trapping, it should be emphasized again that there seem to be few Indians who are very enthusiastic about trapping as a means of making a living. Most men feel it is very difficult to make any money trapping, and yet the items that must be purchased at the store are very expensive. Nearly all the informants felt that the only solution to this situation was steady wage employment, and almost to a man they maintained that they would give up trapping at once if an opportunity for steady employment presented itself.

In the records of the Hudson's Bay Company at Snowdrift there is a comment made by a manager nearly thirty years ago to the effect that the success of the Snowdrift Indians as trappers was directly related to the presence or absence of caribou in the trapping areas. This statement is included here in order to re-emphasize the importance of caribou hunting during the winter. At the time this statement was written into the records, fur prices, particularly for white fox, were very high, but unless caribou were reported in the Barren Grounds, the Indians would not go there to trap foxes. Thus trapping seems to have been strictly incidental to hunting even as late as 1925 or 1930. To some extent, the same is true today even though caribou is no longer quite so essential a food item as it was thirty years ago.

Summer — The summer months are a time of inactivity in the village as there are relatively few subsistence activities until late in August. Nets are set near the village, but fishing is not particularly good and is seldom sufficient to meet more than the immediate needs for dog food. Only occasionally are there enough fish caught so that a few can be dried for human consumption.

A favourite activity during the summer, particularly on Sundays, is a family picnic along the shore of the lake or on some nearby island. An entire household will load themselves into a canoe and spend the day away from the village. On these excursions they gather firewood, and usually someone takes along a .22 rifle and hunts for small game such as hares and porcupines. Later on in the summer when the raspberries and blueberries are ripe, a picnic will also be a berry-picking excursion.

At various times during the summer, some individuals spend a day hunting hares in the bush near the village. A favourite place for these animals is the thick underbrush where movement on foot is difficult. The hunter walks along armed with a .22 rifle. At intervals he stops and makes a noise through compressed lips. More often than not, a hare will come out of the undergrowth to investigate and will be easily shot at close range. Spruce Grouse may also be killed on these expeditions.

Many men use the summer months to make improvements and repairs on their houses, to build a new dog yard, or to put new canvas covers on their canoes.

By far the most important summer activity is the hunting of caribou, which begins about the middle of August and continues until autumn fishing begins around the middle of September. In terms of actual food, this is the most important subsistence activity in the yearly round. Late in the summer large numbers of caribou are usually to be found at the south end of Artillery Lake and in the vicinity of Fort Reliance. Between August 13th and 20th, 1960, members of approximately fifteen households left to hunt in this area. The trip, which was made by canoe, takes about eleven hours with a ten horsepower outboard motor. There is one short portage of about a hundred yards. The route followed is through The Gap which separates the Douglas Peninsula from the Pethei Peninsula, across the short portage into Lost Channel, and around the tip of Kahochella Peninsula almost due east to Fort Reliance (see Figure 3). The Indians use large canvas-covered freight canoes with straight sterns for motor attachments. The largest canoes are

about twenty-four feet in length. Every household head has a canoe, although during the summers of 1960 and 1961 there were some who, since they did not have motors in working order, could not go caribou hunting even though they would have liked to.

It is worth mentioning at this point that one of the difficulties which plague Snowdrift men during the summer months is the condition of their outboard motors. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this item of material culture. A man who has no motor, or whose motor is always breaking down, cannot go on moose and caribou hunting trips except at the invitation of others, cannot get over to the fishing lodges where he might be hired for a day or two and, quite apart from these practical problems, cannot take the picnics and other little trips that Snowdrift families so enjoy during the hot summer months. The Hudson's Bay Company carries no motor parts, and the local manager is not supposed to accept orders for parts unless a deposit is made. In fact, there are no parts catalogues that would help a man to order the accessories he needs from Yellowknife. As a result, most repairs are of a very temporary nature, and the motors, old to begin with in most cases, frequently break down. Outboard motors were first used in the Snowdrift area about thirty-five years ago. At that time, when few men owned motors, it was not unusual for one outboard-powered boat to pull five or six boats when the families left to hunt in the Fort Reliance area in late summer.

Preparations for the caribou hunt are considerable and often take several days. One informant with a large family was involved in intensive preparations for three or four days before his actual departure. First he had to obtain a tent large enough for his whole family. This he was able to purchase second-hand from the fishing lodge at the mouth of Snowdrift River. His old tent, which he had been using for storage purposes, was then taken down and sewn into a smokehouse cover so that it could be used for making 'dry meat' while the family was in the bush. A log storehouse which he started earlier in the summer was hastily completed to house the materials, mostly winter trapping and hunting equipment, that had previously been stored in the old tent. Then the informant purchased \$70 worth of food from the store for the trip. Part of it was paid for with cash earned while working at the fishing lodge, and the rest was drawn as a government ration for one of his sons who had recently returned from hospitalization for tuberculosis. He also obtained thirty gallons of gas which was considered to be sufficient for the round trip. Finally on the day of departure, all the bedding and many personal belongings were packed in suitcases and canvas bags. Rifles were packed and also cooking equipment, a small stove made from an oil can, fishing nets, and many other things. The informant loaded all this gear, his family of six, and five of his dogs into his boat.

All the Snowdrift hunters who go to Fort Reliance to hunt caribou are in hopes that the animals will come down to the lake, where they can be hunted easily. When the animals go into the water, it is a simple matter to shoot them at close range. As it usually turns out, most of the herds stay along the shores of Artillery Lake, and the hunters are handicapped because of their heavy canoes, their families, and the large amount of gear that make it difficult to negotiate the eight or nine portages. Most of the hunters

camp in the vicinity of Acres Lake along the Pikes Portage Route to kill the caribou that represent the southernmost extension of the herds. It is generally considered that twenty to twenty-five animals to a household is a good kill at this time of the year, but during the summers of 1960 and 1961 it is doubtful whether any hunters obtained this number.

The meat is dried over a smokey fire immediately after butchering and is then brought back to the village to be stored in the government cold storage unit. One informant mentioned that, in the past, people had hunted caribou in the Bedford Creek area and into Bedford Lake. Another possible route into the Barren Grounds is up the Snowdrift River to the treeline; there are no rapids except near the mouth of the river (*see* Figure 3). An informant mentioned that he had used this route once or twice in the fall to hunt caribou and moose, but it does not seem to be generally used.

According to a rough estimate made by each of several informants, a single household requires about a hundred caribou to subsist during an entire year. This is definitely an ideal number as far as annual kill is concerned, and it seems certain that most households have been getting by with much fewer animals, at least during the past two or three years.

Those men who do not go to the Fort Reliance area to hunt caribou in the late summer remain in the village for a variety of reasons. During the summer of 1960, some men were working on the school while those who had just recently been laid off the job felt that they had enough money and did not need to hunt. As previously mentioned, some men would like to have gone but did not possess outboard motors or other important equipment. Some were doubtless discouraged by reports that the caribou were in the relatively inaccessible Artillery Lake area rather than along the shores of Great Slave Lake. Many who do not go caribou hunting are able to share in the kill by contributing to the expenses of those who do go. In August 1960 a man who was working on the school purchased the gas for one family's trip, and several others contributed boxes of shells, camping equipment, a motor, and other necessary items to various caribou hunters.

In past years it has frequently been the case that large numbers of Dogrib Indians from Fort Rae came east in the late summer to hunt caribou in the vicinity of Fort Reliance. They would often stop at Snowdrift for a while, and there would be a great celebration with extensive gambling and dancing nearly every night. The Chipewyans cannot speak the Dogrib dialect, but since they can understand it, communication of a sort is possible. One informant said that years ago, when there were more people hunting and trapping in the Snowdrift area, it was a common practice for many boats to go to Fort Reliance together to meet the Dogribs there. This was presumably before the 'flu epidemic in 1929. In August of 1960 and 1961 there were five or six boatloads of Dogribs who made the long trip from Fort Rae, but they went directly to Fort Reliance and did not stop at Snowdrift. The Fort Rae people came without their families and were thus able to portage more easily into Artillery Lake; as a result they killed many more caribou than did the Snowdrift people.

Although of less importance than caribou, moose are also hunted during the summer months. Moose are, of course, considerably less plentiful than caribou, but they can be killed much closer to the village. Some hunters

make moose-hunting trips of two or three weeks, usually in the vicinity of The Gap, but most hunters are not gone from the village for more than two or three days. Stark Lake is a good moose area, particularly at the east end and in McLean Bay. During July 1961 the author accompanied two men on an unsuccessful moose-hunting trip to the east end of Stark Lake that was typical of many trips made by Snowdrift hunters throughout the summer. We made the trip in about four hours and stopped on a small island where camp was set up in a position commanding a good view of the shoreline so that a moose could be observed if it came to the water's edge. During the late evening a careful watch was kept for signs of moose, and after a few hours sleep the watch was resumed about 4:00 A.M. Later in the morning, trips were made to several nearby places along the main shore of the lake to look for fresh tracks. When this proved unsuccessful, we made camp on a different island, and the party slept during most of the day. In the late afternoon of the second day, a trip was made to a large, nearby island where fresh tracks had been previously located. There the party separated, one man taking the boat to the opposite end of the island while the other two crossed the island on foot, making plenty of noise in the hope of driving a moose into the water near the place where the boat was waiting, but without success. The party then returned to the village late at night after an absence of approximately thirty-six hours. This moose-hunting trip was said to have been unsuccessful because there was a steady breeze blowing most of the time and there were not many mosquitoes. Moose hunting is best when there is no wind and consequently many insects. Then the animals are driven into the water to seek relief from the torment and can be easily approached and killed.

Hunting trips of this kind, although frequently unsuccessful so far as the killing of moose is concerned, are usually not a total waste of time and gas. Hares, Spruce Grouse, and ducks are shot, and Tern eggs may be collected on large rocks in the lake where these birds nest. Even though moose are hunted all the year round, the moose kill for any one family in a year does not appear to be great. It is unusual for any hunters, even those who hunt moose frequently, to kill more than two a year. One informant who hunted moose frequently at all times of the year spoke of two very good years during which he killed three and five animals. He also mentioned that it had been five years since he had killed any. During the summer of 1961, nine moose were killed as compared to five in a comparable period the previous year.

A certain number of opportunities for wage employment are available in and around Snowdrift during the summer months, and some Indians take advantage of them. However, the situation changes from year to year, and in recent years at least it has been difficult for local people to predict with any degree of accuracy the amount of employment that is going to be available in any given summer. One form of summer employment can be obtained on the commercial fishing boats that have operated on Great Slave Lake every summer since 1945. The fishing season begins as soon as the lake is free from ice, usually no later than the middle of June, and ends by regulation on September 15. Each boat crew consists of from two to four fishermen including the captain, who is usually a white man or

Métis. In some boats two men are partners, but usually the captain hires the rest of the crew. Most of the captains own no equipment except their gill nets. One of the fishing companies rents boats to the captains and sells them new nets and other gear on credit. A captain who is under such an obligation to a fishing company must sell his catch to the company which financed him (Kennedy, 1956, p. 7). During the summer of 1960 there were four commercial fishing companies with fleets of boats under their jurisdiction, but this number was reduced to three in 1961. It is the men who operate the fishing boats who hire Snowdrift people. There is also commercial fishing through the ice during the winter, but it is only very rarely that Snowdrift people are employed at this time of the year.

The fishing boats operate around the lake, occasionally taking their catch to a barge where the fish are packed into boxes, weighing sixty pounds each when filled, and placed in a cooler. A packer boat comes from Hay River every four or five days to take loads of boxes back to be shipped. The barge may be moved according to the nature of the fishing. There is a commissary on the barge and one at Hay River where employees of the fishing boats can purchase clothing and other items much cheaper than at the Hudson's Bay Company. The commercial fishing boats are not allowed by law to operate within a ten-mile radius of the village.

During the summer of 1960 approximately ten men, mostly young and unmarried, worked for varying periods of time on the commercial fishing boats. The boats made frequent visits to the village even when there were no villagers working on them because the operators liked to have a place to tie up over the weekend in order to enjoy gambling with the village residents or taking part in a square dance. Usually on the occasion of these visits the boat operators would try to recruit Indians for work. The fishing was not particularly good during the season under discussion, and several men who were hired in early July were laid off after a very short time. However, during the second week in August steadier employment lasting to the end of September was offered. The pay for such work was \$250 a month, of which \$50 was for meals. All informants agreed that the work was hard and that the operators of some boats were more difficult to work for and more demanding than others. The work consisted of checking the nets or working on the barge in cleaning and packing the fish. Many of the boats carried up to seventy nets, and it was not uncommon for a crew to check thirty-five in one day.

Work on the commercial fishing boats is not a particularly popular form of employment. More than half of those employed during the summer of 1960 quit their jobs, usually after only two or three weeks. Most felt that the work was too difficult for the pay received and objected to being asked to work sixteen or eighteen hours a day without any additional pay. Although the boats made frequent visits to the village, some men became homesick or wished to quit work to hunt caribou. A few felt that, though the wages were low and the work was hard, they might as well be working on the boats rather than hanging around the village doing nothing. In this way they would at least have adequate food and some money at the end of the summer.

The uncertainty of commercial fishing from the standpoint of fulfilling local employment needs was pointed up during the summer of 1961 when

no boats appeared in the Snowdrift area until September and when only a few men were employed for the remainder of the season. This circumstance was due to the fact that one of the larger companies which operated boats on Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabasca ceased its Great Slave Lake operations entirely and transferred its equipment to the southern lake. The three remaining companies fished in the west arm of the lake and found operations so successful there that they did not need to move into the Snowdrift area until very late in the summer.

Another form of short-term summer employment is provided by the Hudson's Bay Company. Each year a barge bringing supplies for the store must be unloaded and the goods placed in the Company's warehouse. During the summer of 1960 two barges came to the village. One brought gasoline and oil for the store and for the new federal school. The second barge, which arrived at the end of July, brought the store's supplies as well as building materials for the school. The unloading of the second barge took approximately eighteen hours. A group of fourteen men worked for the Hudson's Bay Company at \$1.50 an hour and earned \$12 each for carrying the supplies from the dock to the warehouse. Another group of eight men worked on the barge unloading the supplies onto the dock. These men, who also worked at unloading the school supplies, were paid by the freighting company and earned a total of \$21 each. They were paid off in cash before the boat left. A number of men who went to Fort Reliance in August to hunt caribou also put in some time unloading supplies at the Department of Transport station there. The rates paid were \$17 a day for unloading the barge and \$1.66 an hour for rolling and stacking barrels of oil. When the barge arrived in August 1961, it brought with it a tractor which carried the supplies from the barge to the warehouse. This meant less local employment; only seven men were hired, each earning a total of \$13. The manager said he really did not need so many helpers.

Work on the new school was begun during the summer of 1959 with the construction of a teacher's residence. In mid-July of 1960, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources sent in two carpenters to begin work on the school building and a combination warehouse-powerhouse. Actual construction did not begin until the supplies arrived by barge at the end of July. Six men were hired to work on the school at \$12.50 a day. Construction was finished by the middle of September, but by that time only two men were working; the others had been laid off as the job neared completion. The Hudson's Bay Company allowed full credit against the cheques that the employed men received, and as a result they spent most of the money before it was received. There is now one permanent job at the school for a villager to act as caretaker. The government carpenter in charge of work on the school chose only men who were married and had large families.

The summer tourist industry on Great Slave Lake appears to be growing: during the spring and summer of 1960 two fishing lodges were constructed near the village of Snowdrift. One was open for business by the first of July, but the other was not completed until near the end of the summer. The area's reputation as a good fishing location is growing, and a number of tourists bring their own power boats to Hay River by automobile and

then fish at the east end of the lake. As yet, the Indians have not benefited greatly from the increasing tourist business. They have had no previous experience as guides and do not really know what is expected of a guide. As a result, when they are hired by the tourists, they do not often give full satisfaction. In renting equipment to summer fishermen, the rate seems to vary from \$6 to \$8 a day for a canoe without a motor, and from \$10 to \$12 a day when the motor is provided. The standard price for a canoe, motor, and man is \$15 a day. However, some tourists arrive with their own equipment. The Indians are only just beginning to understand what game fishing is, and they are apt to look on it as a very strange thing for people to be doing. Although initially hostile to sports fishing, they now realize that it can be turned to economic advantage for themselves. Whether or not the two lodges near Snowdrift use the local people to any great extent as guides depends on how successful the business turns out to be and on how the Indians themselves are able to fulfil the expectations of the fishermen. During the summers of 1960 and 1961 a number of tourists expressed annoyance because they hired local people with their boats with the idea that they would act as guides in the accepted meaning of the term and perform such chores as preparing meals, taking fish off the hook, and other activities normally expected of guides. The Indians, on the other hand, were usually under the impression that they had been hired simply to run the motor.

The owner of one of the fishing lodges has used Indians as guides only sparingly during the past two summers and has done most of the guiding himself with the help of his partner. This has created a certain amount of ill-will in the village. Now his business is improving, and he would like to use Indians exclusively in future summers. However, he demands a high standard of guiding and, though willing to explain to the Indians just what is wanted, will probably not be very tolerant of those Snowdrift men who are slow to understand what is expected of a guide. His point of view can be appreciated when it is remembered that most of his clientele, who are paying a very high price for the privilege of fishing in Great Slave Lake, did most of their previous fishing in Ontario and expect guiding service of the quality that can be obtained there. This will be difficult to achieve at first, and it is to be hoped that the lodges will be willing to put up with some unsatisfactory service until the principles of guiding are fully understood by the Snowdrift Indians.

A form of employment that was important during the summer of 1961 was fire fighting. Twice during July the Department of Forestry took twenty men to fight fires in the vicinity of Fort Smith. The men were anxious to go even though the wages were reported to be low. The first time the men were out six days and earned \$66 each; the second time they were out for twelve days, for which average individual earnings were about \$120. Obviously this is not a type of employment to be counted on from year to year, but in 1961 it helped to fill part of the gap left by the commercial fishing boats' failure to appear in the vicinity of the village until late in the summer.

One factor of local economics that should be mentioned is the considerable amount of trading, buying, and selling that goes on in the village, most

of it during the summer months when the people more often have some cash. Two men who worked for nearly three months on the school purchased canoes from others, and another man who purchased a new outboard motor from the store subsequently sold his old one. There is considerable buying and selling of dogs, and the price varies a great deal depending on the time of year and the age of the animals. In the early summer one informant paid \$10 for four one-month-old puppies. It was generally considered that he took quite a risk since much could happen to them before they were old enough to harness. On the other hand, another informant paid \$35 apiece for two full-grown dogs in the fall, just before the beginning of trapping, and felt that he had received a good bargain. An ordinary adult dog may sell for as little as \$3 in the spring and as much as \$15 in the fall, and a very good dog may bring \$15 in the spring and more than \$50 in the fall. The trade in dogs is apparently so brisk that some men raise extra pups on the chance that they will be able to sell them.

In concluding the discussion of wage employment at Snowdrift, it should be emphasized that, as yet, there is relatively little opportunity for the residents to earn wages on any regular basis. The school construction represented only temporary employment that benefited relatively few individuals. Commercial fishing is unpredictable, can use only a limited number of men, and has relatively little appeal to married men with families. The tourist industry is an unknown factor as far as its effect on community economics is concerned. In the past three or four years a few young unmarried men have left the village for varying periods to work in the larger communities of Yellowknife, Fort Smith, and Hay River, but they usually have not been successful in obtaining steady employment, and in all cases have preferred to return to the village after absences no greater than six months. During the early summer of 1960 there was a great deal of talk about employment prospects; many seemed to feel that there would be much more opportunity for work on the school than was actually the case. Nearly all the men in the village pay lip service at least to a preference for wage employment, and there can be no doubt that increased opportunities along this line would give a stability to their way of life that they do not now enjoy.

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE AND UNEARNED INCOME

It is not my purpose in this chapter to discuss formal community organization nor to go into detail concerning the history of the area's relationship with the Canadian Government. It is sufficient to simply point out that Snowdrift is in the area covered by Treaty No. 11, signed in 1921, by which the Indians gave up the rights to their land in return for the various services provided by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. For purposes of administrative convenience, all Indians living within treaty areas are grouped into bands. This grouping, which was made at the time the treaties were signed, was intended to have regional and, to a certain extent, tribal significance. However, at least as far as the area of Treaty No. 11 is concerned, the considerable movement of people that has taken place since the original bands were set up has resulted

in a situation in which any one community is apt to contain members of several bands, thus reducing the administrative value of the band system. Until 1960 most residents of Snowdrift were members of the Yellowknife 'A' or 'B' bands, but these bands were also represented in the communities of Yellowknife, Fort Resolution, Rocher River, Hay River, and Fort Rae. Late in 1960 the Indian Affairs Branch re-aligned band membership by communities, and now all residents of Snowdrift and Fort Reliance are members of the Yellowknife 'A' band.

Band organization consists of a chief and councillors, the number of the latter being determined by the size of the band at the rate of one councillor for every one hundred band members. The Yellowknife 'A' band has two councillors. The policies of the Indian Affairs Branch are administered by an Agency Superintendent who, for the Snowdrift area, is resident at Yellowknife. Until late in 1960, his territory included all of Great Slave Lake and west as far as Fort Providence. However, the communities of Rocher River, Fort Resolution, Hay River, and Fort Providence have now been transferred to the Fort Smith Agency. The Superintendent visits Snowdrift on the average of about once every three months and usually calls a meeting of the band several times a year. The chief and two councillors at Snowdrift act in a liaison capacity with regard to relations between the villagers and the Agency Superintendent.

The education of the Indians of the Northwest Territories, which was provided for in the treaties, has recently been taken over by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, but other services which vary from time to time according to local conditions and the limitations of a budget are provided by the Indian Affairs Branch. The terms of the treaty also provide for a cash payment of \$5 to be made every year to each Indian. The chief of a band receives \$25 and each councillor \$15.

Over the past few years the Indian Affairs Branch has concentrated its assistance program on helping the Indians of Snowdrift to overcome some of the uncertainties of a subsistence economy. This has, for the most part, consisted of providing the Indians with equipment or helping them with the expense of maintaining equipment. Any Indian who needs a nylon fishing net is provided with one, and ammunition is also provided in small amounts. As mentioned previously, the Agency Superintendent has assisted local trappers to market their furs in urban centres to the south. The Branch seems to be moving towards a policy of promoting more stability and removing some of the uncertainty from the trapping economy. During the winter of 1959-60, the Agency Superintendent advanced up to \$100 to each of fourteen trappers in the Yellowknife area thus enabling them to outfit themselves for the trapping season much more successfully than would have been possible with the much smaller advances obtainable from the Hudson's Bay Company. He was discouraged from instituting a program of this kind in other communities because only one of the fourteen paid back the loan. When one of the Snowdrift councillors pointed out that such a thing would not happen in his community, the Superintendent countered with information that he had received from the Company to the effect that sixteen men who received advances for trapping during the 1959-60 season had not yet repaid the loan.

Although the Indian Affairs Branch is well aware of the fact that fish and fur are still the two most important economic influences on the lives of the Snowdrift Indians and is attempting to encourage the utilization of these basic resources, it is also anxious to take every advantage offered that will permit the Indians to enter a wage economy in any aspect of northern development. In this connection the Branch has, for the past several years, secured employment for a number of Snowdrift men to clear brush for proposed roads northeast of Yellowknife. During January of 1960 and 1961, twenty men from the village, working in two groups of ten under locally appointed foremen, cleared 60 miles of roadway from Yellowknife toward Fort Reliance. They were paid by the mile, the rate being \$1,500 a mile for ten men if the brush was not thick and \$1,800 a mile if the undergrowth was heavy. In 1961 one group cut 2 miles and the other 3 miles. Indians in other communities in the Yellowknife and Fort Smith agencies also participate in this program. The Indian Affairs Branch considers that these road-clearing programs are indispensable in alleviating winter unemployment, and it chooses married men with families for the work, whenever possible. Since this employment does not normally begin until January, it does not interfere with the most productive part of the trapping season, which is before Christmas. However, it does have an effect on most of the Snowdrift trappers. They have a tendency to take trapping less seriously than they otherwise would since they know that they will have an assured income later in the winter. It may be that, by providing this type of winter employment, the Branch is defeating its efforts to encourage the utilization of basic natural resources.

A program of assistance that is just getting started at Snowdrift provides help in house construction for individuals who show a desire for improved housing and a willingness to provide some of the materials themselves. If a man will cut the logs for a house, the Branch will provide everything else including roofing, lumber, plywood for interior finishing, windows, doors, paint, insulation.

In July 1960 the Agency Superintendent made preliminary inquiries concerning the construction of houses in Snowdrift, and about eleven men indicated that they were interested. However, when the matter was pursued during the winter of 1960-61, only five indicated willingness to participate in the program. The Superintendent therefore ordered materials, which came in on a barge toward the end of the summer, for five houses. After some initial difficulties and the replacement by others of four of the original five men who had indicated a desire to build new houses, logs were cut and by December 1961 four of the houses had been built. As an added inducement and help to the house builders, they and their families were placed on rations according to the regular ration schedule; \$22 a month for a man, \$12 for his wife, \$15 for each child over twelve, and \$12 for each child under that age. The ration issue, which was obtainable in merchandise at the Hudson's Bay Company, began for each house builder as soon as his logs were on the building site and the actual construction had begun.

For a while in the late summer of 1961 it looked as though none of the houses would be built. The Superintendent made frequent trips to the village, alternately threatening and coaxing those men who had promised to

take part in the program. There is some reason for thinking that work was finally begun because the people were afraid that the Superintendent would cut off other benefits. Whether this is true, there can be no doubt that the house-building program got off to a very slow start. The villagers, initially enthusiastic, became apathetic and probably never would have begun the houses had the Superintendent not kept after them. An explanation for this attitude is difficult to determine. Several informants who spoke about the matter were philosophical but anxious to point out that Indians are different from white men. The intimation was that the Indians cannot quite reconcile themselves to the fact that they are permanent residents of Snowdrift. Also, the point was made that it is the white man's custom to go to a lot of hard work and concentrated effort to build a house. The Indian, on the other hand, is not used to doing this. It is not his way. Therefore, even when a good opportunity such as this comes along, he may be slow to take advantage of it. The Agency Superintendent, however, was convinced that most of the inertia was due to the fact that the Indians do not trust the department. He believed that the Indians expected the houses to be taken away from them on some pretext or other. Whatever the explanation in this particular case, it is certainly true that relations between the people of Snowdrift and the Indian Affairs Branch have often been difficult and sometimes even torturous. More will be said on this subject later in this chapter and also in the chapter on social structure and community life.

As previously mentioned, the Indian Affairs Branch maintains a freezing and storage unit in the village for the use of the Indians. The people store both dried and fresh caribou meat in it as well as moose meat and, occasionally, fish. Both the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company store and the chief hold keys, and the freezer is usually opened on Saturdays, when the people take out the meat they will need for the coming week. The freezer is particularly useful when the families return from caribou hunting in the late summer or early fall. There are no other satisfactory facilities for the storing of large amounts of dried and fresh meat.

Mindful of the growing interest on the part of Canadian sports fishermen in the Great Slave Lake area, the Agency Superintendent would like to interest ten or twelve Snowdrift men in learning to be sports fishing guides. Although such a program is only in the planning stage, it reflects a growing concern for the economic future of the Snowdrift Indians. The plan is to send in a man from the Indian Affairs Branch to teach a number of men the fundamentals of guide work for sports fishermen.

The Indian Affairs Branch provides a monthly ration issue to those individuals or families who, at the discretion of the Superintendent, require assistance. This is handled through the Hudson's Bay Company, and the rations are issued from the supplies in the store. The recipient has certain credit available to him at the first of every month, according to the schedule previously mentioned, and he can spend it in any way he sees fit. At Snowdrift in recent years, rations have been issued to families supporting foster children, to individuals with physical disabilities, and to families whose family head is dead, unknown, or hospitalized. In September of 1960, six persons were receiving rations which totalled \$150 a month. Five were receiving \$20 a month, and one woman whose husband was in the hospital

received \$50 a month. However, in September 1961 only those men building houses were receiving rations. The Indian Affairs Branch also maintains a supply of buffalo meat in the freezer; this is issued monthly to those individuals on rations and also to those receiving federal old age pensions. This meat ration is in addition to the amount received as a ration or pension. The buffalo meat is obtained from Wood Buffalo Park and is distributed to the various villages at the time the game department has its annual kill. The amount sent, which depends on the number of animals killed, is distributed to the villages according to their size and needs. A shipment of 4,000 pounds of buffalo meat into Snowdrift was made in January of 1960. It was freighted in by air at a total landed cost of 41 cents a pound.

It should be emphasized again that the various services provided by the Indian Affairs Branch vary considerably from year to year and are subject to the effects of budget cuts, other financial curtailment, and basic policy changes. For example, when the Agency Superintendent held a meeting of the band at Snowdrift in July 1960 he told those assembled that certain services, such as providing canvas covers, canoe paint, and so on, would have to be discontinued because of cutbacks by Treasury Board. The Indians often do not understand the reasons behind the discontinuance of certain kinds of assistance, and hence frequent misunderstandings arise between the government agent and the people.

Unfortunately, these are not the only misunderstandings that characterize relations between the villagers and the government agency responsible for their welfare. The following examples will illustrate the kind of difficulties that frequently arise. In 1961, for reasons that were obscure, it was decided to make treaty payments in April rather than in July as had been usual. This was supposedly done to comply with a request made by the people of Snowdrift, and yet most of them, when questioned on the matter, violently objected to the idea. At any rate, because of the intricacies of band reorganization, not all the people were paid in April, and it was not made clear to the others when they would be paid. The visit of the Department of Indian and Northern Health Services X-ray party, which previously had always taken place when treaty payments were made, was scheduled for July as usual, and most Indians took this to mean that there would be another Treaty Day. When this did not turn out to be the case, considerable disappointment with ill-feeling was directed toward the Indian Affairs Branch. Others who did not receive their treaty payment had been expecting to be paid by cheque. The Branch did nothing to clear up this conflicting situation although a clear and logical explanation at a band meeting would doubtless have done a lot to straighten things out.

During the summer of 1960 the Indians objected because whites were using the freezer. They particularly objected to the fact that any tourist could prevail upon the Hudson's Bay Company manager to open the freezer at any time so that fish could be stored. The R.C.M. Police also took up a large amount of space by putting in their winter fish supply. The Indians, through their chief, requested the Indian Affairs Branch to rule on this matter, and the Branch informed the Company that fish could not be placed in the freezer at all since it was not built to freeze them properly. The Indians have thus been successful in stopping the whites from putting fish in

the freezer. However, now when they want to put some in themselves, they are told that they should not do so. It is thus natural that they should wonder why it is that whites could put fish in the freezer and they cannot. Misunderstandings of this kind are the result of failure on the part of the Indians to understand all the factors behind the Indian Affairs Branch decisions. This, of course, is partly the result of their limited world view, for, to them, the Agency Superintendent is the government. Given the existing circumstances, it is difficult to see how misunderstandings of the kind described are to be avoided.

The residents of Snowdrift benefit from federal welfare programs in the same way as all citizens of Canada. The family allowance is an important source of income in the village, and in 1961 ten individuals received \$55 a month as old age assistance, which amounted to a total of \$550 a month coming into the village from this source. Although the actual number of old age recipients is not great, it should be pointed out that in households where there is an old person, a large number of people will often be indirectly dependent upon the monthly old age assistance cheque. In some cases the recipients object to this procedure. One informant whose aged mother and father both receive cheques has a tendency to buy things at the store and to charge them to his parents' account. His father finally told the manager that he was not to be allowed to charge unless he gave consent. This precaution was unsuccessful since the son did not hesitate to say that he had his father's permission to make purchases even when this was not the case. Other old age assistance recipients experience the same difficulty, and at least two have directed the manager that none but themselves are to make purchases on their accounts. There is no doubt that the old age assistance program has strengthened the position of the old people in the community. No longer are they forced to accept the charity of their relatives, and these same relatives are now glad to accept an aged mother, father, or other relative into the household.

The payment of family allowance represents an important source of unearned income for the people of Snowdrift. A family receives \$6 a month for each child until it reaches 10 years of age and then \$8 a month until the child is 16 years old. In July 1961 there were twenty-four families receiving family allowance. At that time, the monthly distribution of this form of unearned income was as follows:

<i>Number of Families</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Number of Families</i>	<i>Amount</i>
1	\$40	4	\$18
1	38	1	16
1	34	2	14
2	26	2	12
2	24	2	8
1	22	5	6

The total payment to village families was \$420 a month.

It is quite true that the payment of family allowance has resulted in better clothing and better food for children. Its effect upon trapping has already been briefly mentioned. Some informants maintained that the men used to take their families with them during the trapping season before

family allowance was paid. Although the point could not be adequately documented, it seems likely that the availability of credit at the store each month has done a great deal to keep people closer to the community at all times.

Old age assistance and family allowance are paid by cheque and may be cashed by the recipients at the Hudson's Bay Company if they so wish. However, since the Company allows full credit on both kinds of cheques, it is rare for the recipient to receive cash. More often the cheques are applied either against debts or toward credit.

CHAPTER FOUR

Techniques of Subsistence

DWELLINGS AND FURNISHINGS

The aboriginal Chipewyan dwelling was a conical frame of poles covered with caribou skins. According to Hearne (1958, p. 207-08), the cover consisted of several pieces, each of which was made up of about five large skins. At the top was an opening for the smoke from the fire which burned in the middle of the floor. The opening was covered with a separate hood rather than with two fixed flaps as was common among the Plains Indians (Seton, 1920, p. 149). This type of dwelling, which so admirably suited a wandering people like the Chipewyan, seems to have disappeared thirty-five or forty years ago. Birket-Smith mentions that when he visited Churchill in 1923 he saw only one specimen of the old type. In the Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabasca areas, the old style disappeared even earlier. Of the fifty Indian dwellings at Fort Chipewyan when Seton visited there in 1907 only two had caribou skin covers; the rest had covers of cotton muslin. Seton mentions that cotton coverings were popular because they did not require continual watching to protect them from the dogs. Many lodges, however, had caribou skin hoods since they were less likely to burn than those made of cotton. Seton also illustrates a caribou lodge of the traditional kind with a cotton tent addition in the front (Seton, 1920, p. 149). Canoe canvas later replaced cotton as a more adequate covering for the traditional lodge.

A 55-year-old informant at Snowdrift can remember his father going to the trading post at Fond-du-Lac and purchasing a commercially made canvas tent, the first such tent in the area. The informant was about seven years old at the time. Undoubtedly before this time, canvas had been used for traditional lodge covers and probably had also been sewn into tents of the ridge type. Presumably even earlier, some Indian families trapping at the east end of Great Slave Lake had begun to build log cabins at points along their trap-lines or in the vicinity of the older trading posts such as Fort Resolution. Tents, however, continued to be the most common form of dwelling the year round, right up until fairly recent times, and it has only been within the past ten years that the majority of families have lived in log houses. Even after the Hudson's Bay Company post was established at Snowdrift in 1925, the Indian families, as previously mentioned, visited it only during the summer when they pitched their tents either in the vicinity of the post or on a small island about one mile distant. As late as 1949 the Agency Superintendent was impressed with the small number of log houses at Snowdrift and recommended that the Indian Affairs Branch supply lumber and other materials in order to encourage families to build permanent houses.

The reasons for permanent settlement at Snowdrift have already been discussed. It is sufficient to point out here that in 1961 all families lived in log houses both winter and summer, while canvas tents were used only on the trap-lines and for extended autumn and summer trips into the bush.

There are twenty-six occupied dwellings in the village; twenty-four are of log and two are of frame construction. These range from large two-story, four- or five-room cabins finished on the interior with plywood, to simple, one-room houses of unpeeled logs with a minimum of interior finishing. Five home owners have taken advantage of the Indian Affairs Branch offer of roofing materials, windows, and so on, to improve their log houses, and there are the four new houses built as part of the village housing project previously discussed. Most of the log houses are chinked with moss or dried mud, but a few of the better ones have cement or oakum chinking. In winter, most home owners construct a temporary frame storm shelter to protect the entrance of the house from snow and cold wind and to provide storage space for firewood. None of the houses have basements.

Most Snowdrift homes, though simply furnished, have the crowded, cluttered appearance characteristic of small dwellings occupied by a large number of people of all ages. The house interiors are dominated by the wood-burning heating unit. The furniture normally consists of home-constructed wooden beds or iron cots, set against the walls, and crudely made wooden tables and chairs. A few families have commercially made shelves and cupboards as well as table and chair sets, ordered through the Company. However, most home furnishings are the work of the home owners themselves. Bedding consists of sleeping bags, either commercially made or homemade from blankets, blanket sheeting, and quilts. Clothing and extra bedding are usually stored in canvas bags or metal foot lockers. Mosquito netting is used extensively during the summer months and is usually hung so that it can be folded back during the day. Those families with two-story houses use part of the second story as sleeping quarters for older children and the rest for storage.

The new and better-built houses are finished on the interior with plywood, while the owners of older or less well-constructed ones often nail cardboard over the inside walls for added insulation. Floors of boards or split logs are common, but in a few houses linoleum floor covering or rugs are used. On the walls hang calendars, religious pictures and crosses, and photographs of friends or relations, both alive and dead. Household luxuries include radios, hand-operated sewing machines, and gas washing-machines. About half of the Snowdrift families have radios, but the other luxury items are rare.

In the typical Snowdrift one-room house the stove usually occupies a central position. Groups who gather to visit sit on the beds or on chairs while card players usually group themselves on the floor. Babies are occasionally placed in small canvas cribs suspended from the ceiling. This is a space-saving device and also has the advantage of keeping the infant off the cold floor. Most Snowdrift homes are reasonably neat and orderly. Linoleum floors are kept scrubbed, and as much orderliness exists as can be expected under crowded living conditions. Only a few houses in the village have more than a single room, and the necessity of carrying out all the

functions of day-to-day living in one room complicates housekeeping considerably.

In the vicinity of nearly all the houses in the village are log storage sheds, roughly made and chinked with moss, which contain dog harnesses, hunting equipment, motor parts, and other possessions of the householder. Some families use tents for this purpose, but they plan to build sheds eventually. The contents of these warehouses are revealing as far as the nature and amount of material goods owned by the various families is concerned. A detailed listing of the materials stored in two sheds owned by one of the wealthier families in the community during the summer of 1961 illustrates this point. Although the list probably is not complete, the following items were noticed in one shed: one pair of snow-shoes, a large amount of scrap lumber, two rifles and a shotgun, additional sections of birch wood for snow-shoes, two old trunks containing winter clothing, a box of outboard motor parts, an old gas iron, a gas pressure lamp, caribou skins tied in bundles and hanging from the ceiling, dog harnesses wrapped in canvas and suspended from the ceiling, a wooden box containing a large quantity of dried caribou meat, cans of paint, an old stove for use in the house during winter, a tent, caribou skin parkas, tools and a tool box, numerous traps hanging from nails along the walls, two canoe paddles, three nets in varying stages of disrepair, and several old chairs purchased at one time from the Hudson's Bay Company. The second shed was mainly used for storing dried and frozen fish during the winter, but it also contained an outboard motor no longer in operating condition, several gasoline cans, and a number of caribou skins. Outhouses are also located near some houses.

HEATING, LIGHTING, AND WATER SUPPLY

All houses in the village are heated with wood-burning stoves of one kind or another. Two houses have regular kitchen ranges, but the majority have simple, square 'Yukon' type stoves with small ovens, either homemade from a large oil drum or purchased at the Hudson's Bay Company store. Some families use simple metal stoves with no ovens, which can be purchased from the store for approximately \$11, and some have gasoline-burning pressure stoves for quick cooking, making coffee, and so on, and for general use in summer. Dead trees are cut for firewood and hauled back to the village by boat in summer and by dog-team in winter. During the summer, trips for firewood are frequent as most families bring just enough on each trip to last a few days. In winter there is a tendency on the part of at least some families to stockpile a two or three weeks' supply.

Snowdrift families like to have their houses warm, and even in summer a fire is going much of the time, particularly in the evening. Almost no summer evening is too warm to have a fire. During the day in summer, however, the housewife may prefer to do her cooking outside rather than to heat up the house. Such cooking may be done over a small fire built in half of an oil drum, either in the open or in the canvas-covered conical tent which is used for drying fish and caribou meat. No attempt is made, either in summer or in winter, to keep a hot fire going all night. However, many families will fill the stove with green wood before retiring for the night, as this type of fire

will keep going for a long time, give off a certain amount of heat during the night, and can be easily poked into a blaze first thing in the morning. Very few houses have an auxiliary heating stove in addition to the one that is used for cooking. An auxiliary one is useful only in houses with more than one room. A stove of this kind is particularly adapted for burning green wood because it holds the heat for a considerable length of time.

Light in Snowdrift homes is provided in most cases by coal-oil lamps, although a few families have gasoline-burning pressure lamps. The Hudson's Bay Company sells a large number of candles, but these are mostly used in camps during the trapping season. Since delead gasoline for the pressure lamps costs \$1 a gallon, it is very expensive to maintain them, particularly in mid-winter when light is required during a large part of the day. Although coal oil costs approximately the same as the delead gasoline, it burns much more slowly; therefore coal oil lamps are in popular use.

The lake in front of the village provides a good supply of clean drinking water. Water can be taken with buckets from either of the two docks or at any number of other places around the village. In winter, holes are cut in the ice; melted snow is seldom used. Both men and women are seen daily carrying water in galvanized pails, but, generally speaking, this is a job for women and young people. Water is kept in the houses in open containers, and there is usually a dipper hanging near the pail which everyone uses to dip a drink. However, it was the author's impression that people did not often drink water except in the form of coffee or tea.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

There is no Chipewyan tradition from aboriginal times for the use of dog-teams for transportation. This culture trait complex must have been introduced during the 18th century since Hearne (1958, p. 207-08) mentions that some men with whom he travelled did occasionally harness dogs to sledges. However, even at this time dogs were used mainly as pack animals, and the toboggans were pulled by women. David Thompson, in a general reference to the Chipewyan, makes the following statement:

Some of them have an ancient tradition that a Great Spirit descended on a rock, took a Dog, tore it to small pieces and scattered it, that these pieces each became a Man, or a Woman, and that these Men and Women are their original parents, from whom they have all come; and thus the Dog is their common origin; on this account they have very few dogs; frequently several tents have not a Dog among them (Tyrrell, 1916, p. 131).

It may have been, therefore, that the aboriginal Chipewyan venerated dogs to some extent and, for that reason, kept few animals and were reluctant to use them for transportation or as pack animals.

Today the Snowdrift Indians, like all northern Athapaskans, are heavily dependent on dog-teams for hunting, trapping, and transportation; most men keep a team of from four to eight dogs. The type of sledge or, more properly, toboggan used consists of two sections of hardwood that curve up at one end. These can be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company for approximately \$15 each. They are about eight inches wide and are fastened, side by side, by means of cross-pieces screwed at either end to the two

sections. This gives a toboggan approximately sixteen inches in width and about eight feet in length. An upright panel with handle grips is fastened in position about two feet from the back of the toboggan, and ropes, one on each side, are run from the upper part of this panel to the front end of the toboggan. These lines are threaded through a piece of canvas which has been laid on the toboggan and turned up at the sides. This forms a sort of basket for carrying things. The driver can ride on the back, particularly when crossing lakes, but in wooded country it is usually necessary to walk on snowshoes ahead of the dogs. In spring, a toboggan may be equipped with two wooden runners which raise it about three inches. Metal shoes affixed to these runners help the toboggan to move more easily over wet snow.

Dogs in the village are not housed but are simply chained to stakes near the houses of their owners. In summer and fall the animals are fed on fresh raw fish and in winter on frozen fish. There are nearly 200 dogs in the community, and the problem of feeding them can be pressing at certain times of the year, particularly in summer when the fish supply may be low. Sometimes at this time of the year a dog may go two or three days in succession without being fed. Individual feedings in summer are always small, an average-sized lake trout occasionally serving to feed four or five dogs. Most dogs are very thin by the time the autumn comes, but they soon begin to fatten up as the fishing improves. In winter when the dogs are being used on the trap-line, they will, if possible, each be fed one large fish at the end of the day. If the trapper is planning to rest his team for a day or two, he may give each dog two or even three fish. The Indians invariably express the opinion that a dog cannot be expected to work well on the trap-line if he is not well fed.

During the trapping season a team of five dogs can travel 40 or 50 miles in one day if the load is not too heavy. However, since frequent stops are usually made to check traps, 20 to 30 miles is a more common daily average. Harnesses are usually purchased complete from the Hudson's Bay Company, although a few men buy only the rigid, padded leather collar and make the rest out of webbing or, occasionally, caribou skin. Dogs are harnessed one directly behind the other; long side strips of leather or webbing lead directly from the harness of one dog to the collar of the dog behind. A team of dogs may present quite a striking appearance if the owner wishes. A few men have sets of small blankets about a foot and a half square that fit over the back of each dog. These blankets are beautifully embroidered with floral designs in different coloured yarns, and there is also a fringe of coloured yarn around the edges. Down the centre of each blanket is a green velvet strip to which a set of six or eight bells is attached. Yarn tassels are sometimes seen on the harness of each dog, or a fox's tail may be similarly used. A whip with colourful yarn tassels is usually a piece of standard equipment.

Some men name their dogs, usually giving them English names (Smokey, Blacky, Spot, and so on), but others do not seem to bother. A relatively small amount of irritability is exhibited during the handling of dogs, although harnessing and driving may be accompanied by a considerable amount of what passes for profanity in Chipewyan. Only a few men were observed to beat their dogs regularly, and these individuals were apt to be laughed at

since there is a general feeling that such actions only provide relief for one's emotional tensions and do not result in better performance by the dogs. An attempt is made to raise pups at least once a year, and a few are kept from each litter. As previously mentioned, there is considerable selling of dogs and pups, particularly during the summer and autumn months. A trapper without dogs is, of course, completely immobilized. Every winter, however, there are a number of trappers who find themselves in this position.

FOOD PREPARATION

The foods eaten in Snowdrift homes vary largely according to seasons and to the success of the household head as a hunter and fisherman. All families have a desire for some Canadian foods and will buy them whenever they can. The most popular food products purchased at the store are crackers, peanut butter, coffee, tea, sugar, flour, canned meats, canned fruits, evaporated milk, candy bars, and seasonings. Very frequently the store runs out of some of these items long before the arrival of the barge in midsummer. However, the manager usually has the opportunity to have supplies sent in from Yellowknife on various charter flights when room is available. These charter flights not only give him the chance to order basic staples that are in short supply, but also to obtain shipments of fresh foods such as eggs, bread, oranges, and apples which the villagers are eager to purchase.

Products of flour are among the staples of the Snowdrift diet. Flour is regularly made into bannock and is also used as a thickening in soups and stews. Although crackers and bread are eaten when available, they are not considered as adequate substitutes for homemade products made of flour. Bannock is eaten at practically all meals at all times of the year, and often a family will have little else but this, together with tea or coffee, particularly if there is no supply of caribou meat in the freezer. Usually, however, a meal consists of some kind of locally obtained meat. All the villagers are very fond of meat, and many old people do not consider a meal to be adequate unless it contains meat.

The favourite and almost exclusive means of cooking is boiling. Meats available in the environment are almost always eaten boiled, even though people are aware that there are other ways of preparing them. Fish may be fried occasionally, but most Indians express a preference for boiled fish. A typical meal at any time of the year, whether in the village or in a hunting or trapping camp, might consist of boiled or dried caribou meat or boiled fish, bannock with lard, butter or jam, and tea. Canned meat from the store is occasionally fried, but more often it is eaten straight from the can on crackers or bannock. The people use quite a number of the condiments stocked by the store. Mustard and catsup as well as salt and pepper are used on meat. Large quantities of dill and sweet pickles are also sold. The Indians like their food well cooked and not too hot. Meat and fish that have been boiled are nearly always allowed to cool before being eaten. Tea is by far the favourite beverage, although a considerable amount of coffee is also drunk. Small children do not drink coffee, but they begin to drink tea at a very early age. The youngest children usually have it diluted with water.

Meal patterns in Snowdrift homes vary depending on the time of the year and on a variety of other factors. During the summer months, the general tendency seems to be for most families to take two large meals during the day. One is a breakfast when the family first rises, and the other will be at four or five in the afternoon. In between these two large meals, however, there will be many snacks, particularly on the part of children who are fed whenever they say they are hungry. As far as the main meals are concerned, the family eats together, the various members being called in to eat when the meal is ready. In winter the families rise earlier, partly because children must be at school at 9:00 A.M. where they receive a cup of hot cocoa before classes begin. Three meals a day are more generally the rule at this time of the year. It is also true that trappers on the trail during winter will usually stop in the middle of the day for a meal.

Families usually eat seated around a table, but in summer when cooking is frequently done at an outside fire in order to keep from heating up the house, the meals may be taken in the smokehouse. Canadian style dishes and cooking and eating utensils are used. Most families have enough so that each person can have his own cup, plate, and eating utensils. This is not always the case, however, and frequently one member of the family, usually a child, will have to wait until another is finished drinking his tea before a cup is available. Knives, forks, and spoons are used for eating, but the knife is the most important implement. Most people wash their hands before and after each meal. A wash basin of soapy water is kept at hand, and everyone uses it. The women and older girls wash and wipe the dishes after the meal is finished. Dishes are washed in warm, soapy water, but they are not rinsed.

DRESS

Although all aspects of Chipewyan material culture have either radically changed or disappeared through more than two hundred years of European contact, perhaps the greatest amount of change is to be seen in clothing. In fact, it is nearly impossible to reconstruct any aspect of aboriginal clothing on the basis of vestiges that may remain among the modern Snowdrift Indians. Descriptions by Mackenzie (1801, cxx-cxxii) and Hearne (1958, p. 209) are excellent and indicate the heavy dependence on caribou skins for clothing, a fact which is emphasized by one observer of a later period who states that it required from ten to twelve caribou skins to make a complete outfit for one hunter (Godsell, 1938, p. 246).

Today nearly all the summer and winter clothing worn by men and women is purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company store. A few men use caribou skin parkas and pants in winter, but by far the greater number buy parkas from the store. In summer the men wear shirts and jeans much of the time and sweaters and heavy wool shirts when it is cooler. At all times of the year women wear skirts and sweaters or print dresses, usually with a brightly coloured kerchief and heavy stockings, often with coloured socks over them. Younger girls like to wear slacks or pedal pushers and colourful jackets. The young men are particularly fond of black leather jackets, especially if they have metal adornments and studs, and every male in the village wears a cap.

The chief exceptions to the purchased clothing are gloves and footwear. In winter all men wear gloves made from caribou or moose hide. Gauntlet style with attached strings that go around the neck are favoured. Women generally wear brightly coloured knitted gloves. Footwear, among middle-aged and older men at least, consists almost exclusively of caribou skin slippers in summer and wrap-around moccasins of the same material in winter. In spring and summer, rubbers are generally worn over them. Women also like to wear slippers in summer, but, except for the oldest women, they appear to favour commercial footgear in winter. Moccasins and slippers are always elaborately decorated with beaded or woven yarn floral designs. The latter are usually trimmed with muskrat or hare fur. Although some boys and younger men wear slippers in summer, most of them prefer heavy work shoes, dress shoes, or sneakers. Young girls are more likely to prefer commercial footgear.

Most males wear long underwear at all times, even during the warm summer months. Rain gear seems to have little popularity and is not even carried in the store. Some people wear their winter parkas when it is cold and wet in summer and autumn, but the majority of people do not seem to be worried about getting wet. Children are dressed like their parents, but it seems to be only the older girls who have been away to school who are much concerned with their personal appearance. Many of these young women curl their hair, and nearly all up to the age of thirty-five wear lipstick. Small brooches, earrings, and finger rings are also worn. The store sells perfume, and although younger men occasionally drink it, girls and young women are very fond of using it. Older women use no cosmetics at all and wear their hair straight. Boys and young men like to wear wide belts with heavy buckles, and the store also sells many key chains and large wallets with heavy chains attached. Sweat shirts with 'Snowdrift, N.W.T.' printed on them are also popular. Badges and buttons of all kinds are worn by young men, usually on their caps.

Everybody in the village likes to dress up for important ceremonial occasions. Women will work hard just before Christmas sewing fancy footwear, mittens, and other dress clothes. The store also sells a great deal of new clothing just before Christmas as everyone wants to appear at the midnight Church service on Christmas Eve looking his best. During the summer when dances are held, the girls will often appear in clean white blouses, sweaters, print skirts, and white socks. However, none of the boys or young men appear to make any particular attempt to dress up for these occasions. Treaty Day is another occasion when many people like to appear in their best clothes. It should be emphasized, however, that, with the exception of girls and women between the ages of thirteen and thirty-five, the Snowdrift people have only a utilitarian interest in clothing. New clothes may be the object of aesthetic appreciation at the time they are purchased, but the number of occasions in community life for appearing well dressed is too few to attract the lasting interest of very many people.

DIVISION OF LABOUR

Although men dominate the cycle of subsistence activities at Snowdrift today, there is ample historical documentation for the important role that

women have always played in the economic life of the Chipewyan Indians (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 250; Godsell, 1938, p. 250; Jenness, 1956, p. 23-24). Hearne's faithful companion and guide, Matonabee, explained the failure of the explorer's first two attempts to reach the mouth of the Coppermine River by the fact that he failed to take women with him.

. . . not taking any women with us on this journey, was, he said, the principal thing that occasioned all our wants: 'for', said he, 'when all the men are heavy laden, they can neither hunt nor travel to any considerable distance; and in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labour? Women', added he, 'were made for labour: one of them can carry, or haul, as much as two men. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm at night, and, in fact, there is no such thing as traveling any considerable distance, or for any length of time, in this country, without their assistance. Women', said he again, 'though they do everything, are maintained at a trifling expense; for as they always stand cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times, is sufficient for their subsistence.' This, however odd it may appear, is but too true a description of the situation of women in this country: . . . (Hearne, 1958, p. 35).

The advent of dog transportation on a large scale undoubtedly lightened the work of women considerably, and the general tendency toward sedentary community living in the Snowdrift area has further restricted their participation in subsistence activities. It appears to have been in the hunting and trapping camp that women played their major role in helping the men. Since the men now tend to trap by themselves, and since extended hunting trips are restricted to a few weeks in the late summer and early autumn, a woman's role in these activities is correspondingly reduced. The fact that women now spend most of their time at home in the village has tended to restrict their role largely to activities connected with the home and with the rearing of children.

Around the village, as well as in the bush hunting camp, the setting of nets and the collecting of fish are done entirely by the men. Most of the cleaning of fish is done by women, but men are perfectly capable of performing the task should the occasion arise. Although most of the preparation of meat and skins is the work of women, men sometimes take part in these activities as well. No stigma is attached to a man for performing women's work. Trapping seems to be the one major activity from which women are excluded almost completely. The trapper does all the skinning of animals in the bush, and even if he returns to the village before stretching his fur, this task he performs himself without any assistance. As one informant put it, "women never touch fur." Although this statement was supported by many informants, it was noted that there was one old woman in the village who had her own trap-line which she visited on foot. This same old woman, along with a number of others, also set snares for hares in the vicinity of the village. Occasionally women find themselves in a position where they are forced to take a more active role in subsistence activities. One informant mentioned that when her father died the children were all very young, and her mother took over the support of the family. Although she had some help from male relatives, she did the hunting and trapping and kept the family in food. She became an expert shot and was also a very good trapper. Although this sort of situation is undoubtedly rare, it illustrates a kind of familiarity and capa-

bility with regard to subsistence activities that is characteristic of most Snow-drift women. It can be said, therefore, that a man and his wife form an active partnership for the carrying out of many subsistence activities (*see* Helm, 1961, p. 16, 47).

A wife also appears to have definite economic rights within the nuclear family unit, and this is a direct result of her aspect of the division of labour. Since caribou and moose hides are prepared by the women, it is the women who bring them to the store to sell. If any slippers, skin jackets, or other sewed items are to be sold to the Hudson's Bay Company, it is the women who carry out the transaction and to whom payment is made by the manager. One male informant had some caribou skins which he wished to sell to a friend in the sanitarium in Edmonton. Although the informant carried on all the correspondence with his friend concerning the transaction, it was emphasized that the hides were the property of his wife and that he was acting in her behalf.

When not hunting, trapping, or visiting nets, men often devote their time to the care and repair of their equipment and houses. There is considerable variation from one individual to another in the way equipment is maintained, and this appears to have a lot to do with the success of specific men at subsistence activities. This is particularly noticeable with regard to nets. Some men take good care of their nets, making sure that they are always in a good state of repair, that their location is carefully marked so that boats will not run over them, that they are kept clean, and so on. Others make no attempt to keep their nets in good condition. They allow them, even though very dirty, to remain in the water, and they do not repair them when the mesh becomes torn. In fact, they may purposely tear the net when removing fish rather than take the time to work each fish out carefully. This same variation in the care of equipment is noticeable with regard to traps, dog sledges, and harnesses, as well as houses and household equipment. It is worth noting in this connection that items of material culture, particularly those associated with the work round, do not have a very long life. Outboard motors seldom last more than two or three summers, and the same is true of other mechanical devices. As previously mentioned, the Indians are skilled at improvising mechanical repairs, but they often do not bring this skill to bear until the device has broken down completely and is sometimes beyond repair. There is frequent borrowing of equipment, and those who borrow are not often very careful of the equipment they use. There is no attempt on the part of most men to put up their boats or sledges at the end of the season, and they are often left just where they were last used, frequently far from the village. Sledges and harnesses may be left along a trap-line, and boats are simply pulled out of the water and turned over. However, since boats are one item of material culture that is very expensive and difficult to replace, they are carefully repaired and maintained for years.

Women and children perform most of the household chores, and they carry water. In addition, women have food preparation and child-care to occupy their days, but these chores do not normally consume the entire day, even when the family is large. Children always have plenty of chores to do, although the amount of work demanded of youngsters varies considerably. In houses where there are many children, younger ones may get out of helping

with chores for a long time simply because their parents would rather have them out of the house so that older brothers and sisters can get the work done. Older boys are expected to take an active part in maintaining the family establishment. They haul water, chop wood, feed dogs, and perform other minor chores as well as helping the family head in the major subsistence activities. Girls ordinarily have less to do than boys, although they do help their mothers with housework and child-care. It should be emphasized, however, that there is considerable variation in the degree to which all members of a family assist one another. Some families work together as units under the direction of the family head, while in others the older unmarried boys may feel that they do not need to help with family activities. Nevertheless, in all families the family head may count on his sons and daughters to do at least part of the work, and even though these young people may not contribute their earnings to family welfare they will give freely of their time as long as they are resident under the same roof.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Life Cycle of the Individual

In this discussion of the life cycle of the individual at Snowdrift, emphasis is placed on the developmental and behavioural patterns in the life of a normal individual. Particular weaknesses in the discussions of birth and infancy and in the role of women are apparent. These shortcomings derive from special attitudes at Snowdrift which close many avenues of approach to a male investigator.

BIRTH

Children are generally desired at Snowdrift, and motherhood is regarded as normal. The physiological causes of pregnancy are fairly well understood, but, to the best of the author's knowledge, contraceptives of any kind, although known by some people, are not used. Some of the younger men know about contraceptives from discussions on the subject with Euro-Canadians. Young women may be familiar with them through having had sexual relations with Euro-Canadians, either in the village or in such metropolitan centres as Yellowknife and Fort Smith. However, even those young women who have this knowledge are not particularly interested in using contraceptives nor do they care whether the man uses them. Abortions, too, seem to be relatively rare, although the author heard an unconfirmed rumour about a young woman who had aborted herself in an unspecified manner after having been made pregnant by a transient Euro-Canadian.

Although both parents welcome the arrival of a child regardless of its sex, it is clear that male children are greatly preferred. One informant was heard to exclaim with approval after the birth of his first son, "He will hunt for me!" This preference for male progeny is clearly indicated in the various kin terms used for son. Even when a male child is very small, his father may use a term meaning 'my son who is almost a man.' He will use this term particularly in contexts where the child seems to be showing skills or intelligence. When the boy is about fourteen years of age, with possibly two or three dogs of his own, he may help his father with hunting and trapping, at which time his father may use the term for him which means "my young man." A married couple with only daughters may be an object of ridicule to other people. Similarly, when a couple have had a number of girls and finally have a boy, their relief and pleasure are very obvious. The only son in a family will frequently be badly spoiled, and behaviour that would be quickly punished in other children will be praised as an indication of spirit and liveliness in him.

Women take no particular precautions during pregnancy, and there is no apparent concern over an approaching birth. There are no dietary restrictions,

and the mother continues her usual chores right up until the time that labour begins. However, she will avoid heavy lifting and carrying during the last weeks of pregnancy, if this is possible. In recent years it has been generally the case that pregnant women go to Yellowknife to have their babies delivered in the hospital. This is arranged by the Indian and Northern Health Services nurse, but some women prefer to give birth in the village, often because there is no one with whom they wish to leave their other children while they are away.

All births that take place in the village are attended by midwives, an informal group of elderly women past child-bearing age. Several of the midwives will attend each birth, one or two to do most of the work, and others to watch and give advice and help if necessary. Close female relatives of the expectant mother sometimes attend. The men in the household arrange to be away at this time. The amount of pain at birth seems to depend upon the physical condition of the mother and how many children she has had. Women who have had many children give birth very easily, and occasionally a child is born before a midwife arrives.

According to Birket-Smith (1930, p. 76-77), the traditional position for delivery was for the expectant mother to lie on her stomach, with her knees slightly bent, while another woman assisted by drawing a caribou skin tightly about the lower part of the body. In recent years, however, the visiting nurse has encouraged women to have their babies lying flat on their backs. Births are taken very much for granted, and there is a minimum of disturbance in the family pattern of living by the arrival of a new child. If the delivery is normal, and the mother is in good health, she is usually up and resuming her duties within two days after the baby is born, sometimes sooner. It is interesting to note that the lack of precautions during pregnancy, the tendency for most babies to be born in the Yellowknife hospital, and the general matter-of-fact approach to a birth by all members of the family concerned are in marked contrast to the traditional attitude toward the event as described in historical sources. Hearne describes in some detail the isolation of an Indian woman as soon as labour begins and the long period of uncleanness following the birth (1958, p. 58-59). More than one hundred and fifty years of Euro-American contact and, particularly, the intensive efforts in public health over the past ten years are probably responsible for the elimination of the traditional attitudes about birth.

INFANCY

The household always receives a new baby with a great deal of affection and joy. Other children adapt readily to a new baby and take pride in being able to hold it. Parents like to play with their young babies, but this demonstrative affection tends to taper off as the child outgrows babyhood. However, it was observed that four- or five-year olds still receive considerable attention, particularly if they continue to be the youngest members of the family. By the age of five or six, however, a child is usually receiving the routine responses reserved by adults for older children.

Although homes where there are new babies are often kept very warm, there seems to be no special attempt to keep the baby warm. In the crawling

stage he may crawl on the floor with practically no clothes on, and the floor is the coldest part of the house. In the house, the small infant remains in a homemade crib or a hammock suspended from the ceiling, or it may simply lie on a bed if no other place is available. In the home of one informant it was observed that the baby, completely swathed in bedding and with a piece of mosquito netting over its face, spent much of the time in a hammock made from a piece of blanket. If it began to fuss or cry, the nearest person would simply rock the hammock, and this seemed to be sufficient to quiet the child.

Babies seem to be kept reasonably clean. Diapers are usually made from absorbent cotton sheeting purchased at the store, and soiled ones are changed immediately. In fact, when a small infant starts crying, one of the first things a mother checks is to see whether the diapers are soiled. As far as general cleanliness is concerned, older boys and girls sometimes get impetigo, but this was rarely noticed with infants up to two years of age. Just the same, when the doctor made visits to the village during the summer of 1960, she commented often to the mothers on the condition of the babies, always stressing the fact that they should be washed and kept clean, pointing in particular to dirty heads and scabs on the heads. Outside the home, infants are not carried in any kind of conveyance but are simply held in the arms. They are dressed in readymade baby clothes purchased at the store.

Small babies receive the breast as soon and as often as they demand it, and children up to two years also receive it on demand if they have not already been weaned. It was noted that in all cases, suckling sessions tended to be brief, usually not more than ten minutes at a time. Breast feeding is relatively undemonstrative, and very little emotion seems to be involved. The visiting nurse has told the women that it is unwise for them to nurse their infants after they reach the age of one year. Nevertheless, many mothers continue breast feeding until the child is three or four years old. The age of weaning, therefore, varies considerably and is apt to depend primarily on the time of the mother's next pregnancy. However, one woman was observed by the author to be nursing two infants at the same time.

Weaning is a very easy process and appears to take place without any difficulty. This is probably due to the fact that a baby is usually weaned to a bottle rather than to food. However, this tends to depend to some extent on the age at which the child is weaned. One of the more progressive mothers, who weaned her child at the age of one year, as the nurse suggested, kept on bottle feeding him for another year, and even when the child was nearly four years old he liked to have a bottle once in a while. At any rate, it is certain that babies continue to take bottles long after they are capable of feeding themselves. The bottle is also a favourite device for quieting a tired or angry child.

The problem of correct food for babies and small children is one that is always of particular interest to the doctor and nurse when they make their periodic visits to the village. On one of these visits the doctor pointed out to the author that several of the babies were overweight with a soft, more or less flabby fat which indicated insufficient solid foods in the diet. She suggested to the mothers that these babies be fed more fish, cut up fine or made into soup. She was also pleased to note that more mothers appeared to be feeding pabulum to their infants. In spite of what the nurse and doctor have told them,

some mothers do not think that it is right to feed a small child on anything but milk. They will not give their infants pabulum or other easy-to-eat foods that are recommended. Instead, they will feed them nothing but milk, either from the breast or from a bottle, until the child is old enough to eat meat and other items of the normal adult diet. More progressive mothers look down on this practice and point out that that is why many of the small children in the village are undersized for their age. A number of these more progressive mothers were observed feeding their small children crackers spread with lard, fish cut up into small pieces, as well as pabulum and sweet baby cookies.

Mothers say that their children begin to walk between the ages of one and two years. First steps elicit the same grateful response that is characteristic in our own society, and children who are slow to learn to walk are encouraged to try, time and time again, by their parents. Children between the age when they first walk and six or seven seldom wander far from their homes except when accompanied by a parent or an older sibling.

A baby is allowed to play with practically anything that attracts it, although it will be protected from dangerous objects. As soon as a baby is old enough to understand, it will be told to release an objectionable article, and some attempt is made to appease it by offering a toy, its bottle, or some other acceptable thing. Usually a considerable effort will be made to quiet a crying infant or small child, but if the mother is occupied with some other activity, an infant may scream a great deal without eliciting any response on the part of the parent. An infant of about two years was observed standing in front of its mother with arms outstretched, screaming to be picked up. However, the mother was very busy talking to her husband who was in the process of putting up a tent. It was not until she had finished the conversation that she took notice of the child. A man was observed punishing his young son, aged three, for doing something wrong. The infant burst into tears, and, having made his point about the punishment, the father attempted to pacify the child by a combination of cuddling and teasing remarks. In this case it worked, but if it does not, a child's screams are ignored after a while, or he may receive further punishment.

It was noted that men play a fairly large part in the experiences of infancy and the very early childhood of their offspring. Men are often seen walking around the village carrying their small children, and several male informants were observed administering to the toilet needs of their infants. Fathers seem to be involved as much as mothers are so far as discipline is concerned, and perhaps they play an even more active role in comforting and distracting a punished child. Fathers show many signs of affection and often hug and kiss their infant children.

Very little was learned with regard to toilet training. There appears to be no stress placed on rapid training, although success in this regard on the part of the child is rewarded with kind words by the parents. Most children between two and three years were observed to be completely trained, although older children sometimes require assistance. During the summer of 1960, a four-year-old boy was observed using a small pot in the house, but he required assistance from his father or mother. The following summer, however, he, like adults and older children, used the outhouse and did not need any assistance at all. Small boys and girls, under the age of five, will urinate or defecate

anywhere outside without fear of being seen. Older children prefer not to be seen but do not make any great effort to hide themselves. Adults always go out of sight to perform toilet functions if there is no outhouse handy.

Today at Snowdrift all the Indians have French or English given and family names, and the traditional attitudes associated with names and naming are difficult to determine. According to Hearne, names were always given to children by their parents or near kin, and boys' names were generally derived from some place, season, or animal (1958, p. 59). Informants claimed that the aboriginal Chipewyan had one name, or possibly more than one, but no family name. This name was not given at birth but usually at the time when the child first began to make the effects of its personality felt. The name would reflect some aspect of its personality, and later on in life the child might receive a number of nicknames for similar reasons. The first missionaries who came into the area gave the people Christian names only, and these were usually French, just as they are today. The use of family names on a large scale seems to have begun with the first treaties and the first contacts with the Government, when it was necessary for the various members of a family to be readily identifiable for the purpose of maintaining accurate band lists and other government records. At that time certain individuals seem to have taken names, perhaps from Euro-Canadians in the area, or from geographical locations, or perhaps English and French translations of their Chipewyan names, and to have used these as family names. Today, new babies are not given Chipewyan names in any formal sense, such as at baptism when they receive their Christian name, but they still tend to acquire nicknames based on the same characteristics as in former times.

It was noted that in most cases of social interaction between two individuals, personal names were used to a much greater extent than were kinship terms. One does not often hear kin terms used either as terms of reference or address. The given name is invariably used as a term of address, and either the given name or the full name as a term of reference. A man refers to an unrelated married woman by the first name of the husband followed by the term 'wife.' The Chipewyan terms for mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather are not used at all. Most children call their parents 'ma' and 'pa,' or 'mummy' and 'daddy.'

Adoption takes place infrequently in the village since no families have more children than they want or feel they can take care of. The most common form, when it does occur, is grandchild adoption. It is sometimes the case that the first child born, whether it is a boy or a girl, is given to maternal or paternal grandparents to help them. From then on, the child considers the grandparents as his parents. It may even be the case that the child cannot marry until the old people are dead. In 1961 there were only two cases of grandchild adoption in Snowdrift, and one of these appeared to be a temporary arrangement. The principle of grandchild adoption can be seen under circumstances other than straight adoption. There are, for example, several cases in the village where an elderly grandparent is living with a married son or daughter. In these cases the oldest grandchild is usually considered as the special charge of the grandparent and is often with him or her and subject to the grandparent's whim. In one case that came to the author's attention, the grandmother always took her oldest grandchild with her when she went to

the store and would purchase candy bars and other things for him; this she would not do for any of his brothers and sisters. In cases of adoption, either temporary or permanent, arrangements are always made with regard to the family allowance. If a temporary adoption is brought to a close, the Agency Superintendent is notified so that the family allowance payment can be transferred.

CHILDHOOD

Children form a large segment of the Snowdrift population; there were 75 individuals under fifteen years of age in 1961. Small children stay close to their homes at all times. Children between the ages of two and five stay inside a good deal of the time in winter, and in summer they play for hours by themselves in front of their homes without supervision except for an occasional glance out the door by a parent or older sibling. When people visit one another and bring their small children, these, too, play close to the house under a watchful eye. Parents always know where their small children are and, should they wander out of sight, will look for them to make sure that they are all right.

When children reach the age of seven or eight, mothers do not concern themselves with their whereabouts during the day. Older boys and girls wander freely around the village in groups or alone, returning home only at mealtime. If there are chores to do, the child is told of them when he returns; parents seldom go looking for a child to do chores. When it begins to get dark, children are rarely seen around town and are expected to be home. The author noted that if boys and girls up to fourteen years of age were visiting in his house after 9:00 P.M., their mothers frequently came after them to take them home. After dark it is very seldom that children from one home visit the children of another unless accompanied by an adult. Bedtime varies according to the time of the year. All villagers go to bed much later in summer when there are long hours of daylight than in winter when it gets dark early. The fact that children must be at school at 9:00 A.M. from September through June also influences their sleeping habits. Even the smallest children are never put to bed until they want to go to sleep or until they fall asleep. Parents may suggest to a child that it is sleepy, and they may wish that a cranky child would fall asleep, but they do not put the child to bed. Since parents and very small children frequently sleep in the same bed, this is a practical move, as no child will stay asleep in a one-room house when others are present unless it wants to go to sleep or is too tired to stay awake. Sometimes a mother was observed lying on the bed with her child and trying to persuade it that it was sleepy. If the child desires to stay up, the mother will give up this procedure after a few minutes. Older children can go to bed any time they wish. If a child falls asleep during the day, it is not awakened, nor is it discouraged from sleeping. In other words, sleep is considered as something natural that should take place whenever the urge comes.

Snowdrift children become aware of the facts of life and death at a very early age. This is understandable under circumstances where many people of all ages frequently live together in a single room. Most children have seen

a corpse by the time they are seven or eight years old and have witnessed their parents or married siblings performing sexual intercourse. Children do not often joke or even talk about sexual matters, presumably because it is so much a part of everyday observation as to be hardly worth talking about.

Boys and girls play together up to the age of thirteen or fourteen but probably not a great deal after the age of nine or ten. Large groups of older boys and girls occasionally get together in the evening for a game of baseball, but these games seldom include girls over the age of fourteen. For the most part, boys and girls form their own play groups after the age of nine or ten. Often a family of boys and girls will play together most of the day around the house and will only join larger sex-divided play groups in the evening. Although larger play groups tend to be made up of individuals of approximately the same age, brothers and sisters of considerable age difference will play together happily at home.

The games that very small children play in front of their own or neighbouring homes are nearly always associated with occurrences around the home or village. Thus the five-year-old son of an informant, with his cousin of the same age, was observed to have converted a small step ladder into a canoe by tying an old motor part to one end; the boys took imaginary trips in their canoe to Fort Reliance to hunt caribou. On another occasion the same child was absorbed for more than two hours in the following way: a small stick of wood was driven into the ground, and a piece of rope was tied to it with the other end tied to an empty milk can. This apparatus represented a dog tied to a stake. The small boy would move the can up and down at the end of the rope while making a whimpering noise like a dog straining at its tie. The day after an informant put up a canvas-covered tipi for drying fish, his three sons, aged five to twelve, played for hours around a small one that they constructed.

Older boys and girls are usually observed in groups of two or three wandering around the village, sitting on the steps of the store, or perhaps playing a game of tag or 'all-in-free' by the flag pole in front of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the evening, boys between the ages of eight and fourteen or fifteen often play a form of 'cops and robbers' in the tall bushes around the village. There seems to be no organization to the games and no sides. The boys just creep through the bush and try to 'shoot' one another with roughly-made wooden rifles. The popularity of this game has increased considerably since films were shown for the first time in the village during the summer of 1961. However, most of the children had previously seen films while at school at Fort Smith.

The disciplining of children appears to be relatively mild, although it is difficult to be sure since parents often seem reluctant to administer punishment in the presence of an outsider. Parents usually attempt to distract a child who is misbehaving; nevertheless the author observed more than one case where effective punishment was meted out. On one occasion, a small boy and his mother were seated in a canoe preparatory to departure on a Sunday afternoon picnic. The child leaned over the side and got the legs of his trousers wet. His mother hit him lightly on the side of the head several times and scolded him severely. He cried loudly, but she ignored him. On another occasion a five-year-old boy was seen playing near his home. When his

mother came to the door of the cabin and called him, he hid in the bush. She went looking for him, and, on finding him, hit him with a switch, whereupon he went back to the house in tears. An older boy, about nine years of age, was observed to do something wrong in his house, for which he was verbally rebuked. He came out, sat on the front steps, and cried and sulked. This behaviour was ignored for a while, but then his mother came out, hit him twice on the side of the head, and told him to go inside and upstairs. He cried a great deal but after a while asked to come down. His father and brothers ignored him while this was going on.

It was noted that adults do not often discipline other people's children, even when their own child is the victim of mistreatment. They wait for the parent to administer the discipline or they simply remove their own child from the situation (*see* Helm, 1961, p. 87). For example, a small boy was observed seated in a canoe that was pulled up on the beach. An older boy rocked the canoe and made the little boy cry. Nothing was said by either parent for some time, and then the father of the small boy removed his son from the canoe. If adults are present, serious aggression of one child towards another is not tolerated. On numerous occasions parents were observed to severely discipline their children for fighting with another child. On one occasion two boys were wrestling, and although it was a hard fight, they did not seem to be angry with one another. For this reason the parents of both boys made only half-hearted attempts to stop the fight. It was obvious, however, that had any anger been shown, the fight would have been stopped at once.

It was noted that children occasionally object strenuously to a parental decision and will sulk or cry for a long time but will seldom wheedle or in other ways attempt to get the parent to change his or her mind. Outward signs of affection between parents and children appear to end at the age of ten or eleven. After that, children are treated more or less as other adults, although they may still be disciplined severely.

In concluding these comments on discipline, it can be said that active, responsible participation in the affairs of the household is conducive to the early acquisition of an adult outlook, and discipline plays a minor role. Nevertheless, children are expected to conform to definite rules of behaviour and are not permitted to be a disruptive force in the household. There are effective means of seeing that a certain standard of behaviour is maintained.

Although, as previously mentioned, the age at which household chores begin for both boys and girls depends to some extent on the ages of other children in the family, it is unlikely that children below the age of eleven have much to do. They may help unload a boat, or do light work around the house, but most of their time is their own. A boy of twelve or thirteen may have most of the light chores to do, such as feeding dogs, emptying garbage, hauling water, and other similar tasks. Older boys do this sort of work too. In fact, a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old may be the busiest member of the family. He will check the nets, run the boat on family outings, and do most of the heavy work around the house. It was noticed that in families where there are boys of seventeen and up, the family head is relieved of much of the routine work in maintaining the house and equipment.

For girls, helping with the housework and looking after younger siblings are important activities. This work sometimes begins when the child is as

young as eight or nine, and it is probable that girls begin to play an active part in household activities earlier than boys, largely because much of a girl's work does not require physical strength.

The most important chore that older children of both sexes are expected to perform is looking after younger siblings. They are often called to play with a small child, to distract it when it is angry or annoyed, and to watch small children when the parents wish to do other things. These older children amuse and play with the infants, thereby giving the parents a little more freedom than they would otherwise have. This activity, as previously mentioned, nearly always takes place in or near the home. Older children are not expected to have their younger siblings or relatives with them when they play away from the house, and only rarely are older children seen wandering around the village with younger brothers or sisters in tow. In spite of these chores, however, it should be emphasized that children and young people of all ages have a great deal of free time.

It is difficult to detect the ways in which children learn the techniques of Subarctic living. Education of this kind is an informal process in which the child more or less adopts the example set by older people. This is relatively easy for girls who, as previously mentioned, begin to take their part in household chores at a very early age. By working with their mothers and older sisters and being guided by them, they gradually learn to fulfil a woman's role in the community. Because of the nature of the subsistence activities and the special skills and physical stamina involved, a boy may be nearly out of the period of childhood before he really begins to participate actively. The necessity of attending school further restricts his involvement in adult activities. During the summers of 1960 and 1961, boys between the ages of ten and fourteen, but seldom younger, were frequently observed accompanying their fathers or older brothers on brief hunting trips away from the village. On these trips the boys did not participate in any active way in the hunt, nor were they equipped to do so. These boys did not appear to know much about the operation of a rifle; none were taken along for their use. Usually they carried game bags, helped to prepare the fire, and made themselves useful in other ways. As a special treat, they might be allowed to operate the outboard motor on the return trip. In other words, if a boy learns anything on trips of this kind, he does so entirely from observation. His duties on such trips are much the same as his duties at home.

YOUTH

The period of youth is a relatively long one at Snowdrift, and there is no clearly defined limit to it. Boys are regarded as youths when they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen and begin to take on at least some of the men's work. Marriage terminates the period of youth for both sexes, although in ideas and interests young married men and women are often more closely associated with their unmarried counterparts than they are with adults.

The age at which a young man begins to take a truly active part in subsistence activities varies considerably, but, generally speaking, sixteen is the age at which youths are expected to know something about hunting and trapping and to contribute their skills in this regard to the general family

welfare. Several sixteen-year-old informants claimed they had hunted caribou frequently with their fathers but admitted that they had not as yet shot a moose nor did they know much about moose hunting. Many young men in their early twenties said that they had also begun trapping at about the age of sixteen. Usually they went along for several years with their fathers or some other relative who showed them the process of trapping: how to recognize tracks, set traps, skin animals, and so forth. Not the least of these, and perhaps the most difficult to learn, would be familiarity with the country. It is generally the rule that a young man will trap with some older relative for at least four or five years before attempting to go out on his own. This means that by the time a man is in his early or middle twenties, he is thoroughly familiar with at least one and probably more than one trapping area and is also skilful at other trapping activities. It seems likely that older men began trapping at an earlier age. One informant in his mid-forties claimed that he had started trapping with his father when he was thirteen years old. He often stayed in camp as a sort of handy man, feeding dogs, making tea, and performing other chores. The increasing tendency toward sedentary community life, as well as school responsibilities, has kept younger children in the village most of the time. It should be emphasized that youths even as old as nineteen or twenty frequently do not trap regularly. It may be that the family does not have enough dogs so that both the father and son can trap, or perhaps a father will prefer to have his son in the village looking after the rest of his family while he is in the bush. As previously mentioned, young men are frequently responsible for the heavier tasks around the house. They are also the ones who are most likely to take advantage of summer employment opportunities.

Young women do not form so distinct a group as the young men, partly because they marry at an earlier age, and also because at Snowdrift at the present time there are fewer of them. Young women and older school girls have less free time than the men because of the nature of their duties, which in a large family tend to increase as they grow older. Older girls share actively in all women's work and are often as proficient at these tasks as their mothers are, a fact that is related to the early age at which they begin them.

Since most young men continue to live with their parents at least up to the time they are married, they are expected to turn some of whatever money they earn over to their parents, and they apparently do so without much urging. The author found that whenever a family head was attempting to estimate his wealth, he invariably included whatever money was currently being made by members of his family. Occasionally this attitude expands in the mind of the family head to the point where he considers that he can sit back and let the younger members of the family do all the work. For example, one informant who used to be considered one of the very best trappers in the village seldom leaves the village in winter now that he has two boys to trap for him. At any rate, in most families no one questions the right of the family head to take money from those living under his roof. At the same time, spending money may be handed out to young men and women, as well as to children, by the family head, when it is available. Further interesting examples of the authority of the family head in situations of this kind are as follows: A sixteen-year-old informant went out to fight a fire, and when he returned

his father told the Hudson's Bay Company manager not to give him any credit on his cheque. Instead, the father took the cheque when it came and gave his son a certain amount of spending money. — Two boys in their late teens had debts at the store from November and December trapping. In January they both left the village to work on the road, and when they returned they told the Hudson's Bay Company manager that their father had their money and would come in to pay the debt. — An older informant said that when he was a young man he was completely under the control of his father as far as his earnings were concerned. He speaks of his father as 'boss,' and it was only during spring muskrat trapping, when he often went to Yellowknife to trade his fur, that he was more or less able to do what he wanted with his money. This situation lasted until the time he was married.

Young people have a considerable amount of free time, particularly in the evenings, and, since entertainment possibilities in the village are distinctly limited, they seem to spend a lot of time just wandering around town, dropping into the various houses to visit, or sitting in groups on the front steps of houses talking. Since a few families have radios, these houses tend to be the focal points for groups of young people. Nearly every summer evening a group of boys get together to play a form of baseball in an open area near the store. They have a soft ball and just a piece of wood for a bat. They play a scrub game, and any number of players can be on a side. Strikes are called only when the player misses a swing, and, depending on whether he thinks the ball has been well hit, he can choose to run or not. A player can be put out by being touched with the ball after he hits it. This can be achieved by one of the members of the opposite side throwing the ball at him. He is also out if the ball he hits is caught on the fly or on the first bounce. A side is not retired until all the players have made an 'out.' The players of this unusual game are nearly always the unmarried men, ranging in age from sixteen to thirty. The game begins about 8:30 p.m., and most villagers come down to stand around or sit on the steps of the store to watch. It will continue until after midnight or until it gets dark. After that, the players disperse and go home or go off to visit.

It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of visiting as one of the chief diversions for the whole village at all times of the year. For young people, the term used for this activity is to 'walk around.' This consists simply of going from one house to another, visiting for a little while, and then moving on. This goes on to some extent during the day, but it is in the evening that 'walking around' is carried on most vigorously. Although visiting is an important form of entertainment for all villagers, it is an almost compulsive activity for the unmarried men as they seem to be restlessly on the move from one house to another, sometimes alone but more often in groups of two or three. 'Walking around' is closely tied in with the drinking pattern, as will be shown later. As far as young people are concerned, it would seem that this almost compulsive visiting reflects the poverty of their social life and the almost desperate search for something interesting to do.

SEX RELATIONS, COURTSHIP, AND MARRIAGE

Most Snowdrift boys are about fifteen or sixteen when they become interested in girls, and the girls are about thirteen or fourteen when they begin

to receive the attention of boys. Pre-marital sexual relations are very common and begin at an early age. Some young men told of having sexual intercourse as early as sixteen, and all unmarried men in the age group of eighteen to thirty boasted of numerous conquests. Girls usually have their first sexual experience at the age of thirteen or fourteen and appear acquiescent to such activity largely because of an inability to say no and an unwillingness to offend the boys rather than because of any enjoyment on their part. The problem of finding a secluded place for sexual activity at Snowdrift is not an easy one to solve, particularly in winter. Two sixteen-year-old boys were observed with girls in the home of one of the boys while his family was on a Sunday afternoon picnic and would be away from the village for a considerable length of time. While the girls were in the house the mother of one of them became suspicious and knocked on the door. Both girls were observed to leave a short time later. Parents appear to be dissatisfied with this state of affairs, but it is rare that they take even such overt action as described above. Nevertheless, it is likely that girls in particular are subjected to family pressures at home concerning their sexual activities. One female informant, who was well known for her willingness to satisfy the sexual needs of the young men, said that she did not really care whether or not she became pregnant but mentioned that her mother would not let her continue to live with the family if she did. She also said that each month her mother asks her whether or not she has had her menstrual period. Women who have given birth to illegitimate children do not appear to be under any particular stigma nor are the children.

It seems likely that the high rate of pre-marital sexual activity is directly related to the large number of unmarried young men in the community. During the summer of 1961, out of the eighteen young men in the village between the ages of eighteen and thirty-one, only three were married. Eight of these men were between twenty-five and thirty-one years of age, and only two of them were married. At the same time, there were only three unmarried girls over the age of sixteen and none over twenty. Thus, not only is there a disproportionate number of unmarried males in the village, but their chances for marriage are very slim indeed. They must either look for wives outside the village, which most seem unwilling to do, or wait for the younger girls to grow up. If they wait for the younger girls to grow up, they may find that these girls, under the influence of the education that is just being made available to them in the village, will want to leave the community. Thus the men are up against a situation that is difficult to reconcile. They are a little too old and too committed to life in Snowdrift to want to leave the village permanently, and yet the age group from which they will be forced to choose mates may be a group whose interests are at least partly centred outside the village and who may want to leave it.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that much of the interest of young men is centred on sex and the means of satisfying their sexual requirements. At various times in the past the R.C.M. Police have warned the villagers about the seriousness of having sexual intercourse with girls under sixteen, and although this runs counter to accepted village practice, there is at least a tendency for young men to feel that they should be careful about their relations with under-age girls. There are reputed to be at least two elderly women in the village who make themselves available to young men for a

small payment. The author observed one young informant who, when drunk, stopped at the cabin of an elderly widow who lived by herself. When he came out some time later, he said that the old lady had accommodated him in exchange for a bottle of insect repellent. The same old lady was heard to proposition the Hudson's Bay Company manager in the hope of obtaining credit.

It was possible to observe some courtship patterns in the village, even though there were few overt signs of friendship between particular boys and girls. Letters apparently take the place of more obvious signs of friendship, and the few eligible girls were constantly receiving letters from various boys. These letters were usually not delivered personally but were left at the home of a relative where the girl would pick them up. It is likely that assignations are planned in these letters. The circumspect nature of boy-girl relations is emphasized by the example of a young male informant whose girl friend returned to the village by plane from the school at Fort Smith after an absence of nearly ten months. Although he was at the dock when the plane arrived, he made no move to greet her. Later that evening, she came over to his house, ostensibly to visit his younger sister, after already having picked up a letter from him at the home of her uncle. This same informant numbers among his most important possessions a small booklet that describes how to write love letters. It is interesting that although the concept of romantic love was apparently not important to the Chipewyan in aboriginal times and is probably not emphasized to any great extent at Snowdrift today, it nevertheless has a certain vague attraction for the young men and women. The age group between sixteen and twenty-five, some of whom are at least partially literate, favours cheap love-story magazines above all others, even though it must be extremely difficult for them to identify with the people and situations described in such magazines.

Marriage is, of course, the normal state of affairs at Snowdrift, and there are no men or women who would remain single by choice. Nevertheless, there are no rules of endogamy, and it would seem that if the young men were particularly anxious to find wives they would make a greater effort to look for them in Yellowknife and other villages. It may be that, since sexual needs can be fulfilled outside the marriage bond without too much difficulty, young men are not in any hurry to take on family responsibilities. No cases of sexual inversion were known, nor was anything to be learned about incest or other forms of abnormal sexual relations.

Information on the aboriginal marriage customs of the Chipewyan is not particularly detailed in the historical sources, but it is clear that since women did much of the work when families were on the move, it was desirable for a man to have several wives. However, since only the best hunters would be able to maintain more than one wife, polygyny, as is usually the case in all human societies, was more the exception than the rule (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 250; Godsell, 1938, p. 250; Hearne, 1958, p. 200; Jenness, 1956, p. 23-24; Ross, 1867, p. 310). Hearne (1958, p. 67) also describes the custom of wrestling for wives. A weak man, unless he was a very good hunter, would not be allowed to keep his wife if a stronger man wanted her. Whatever may have been the case in aboriginal times, the Chipewyan have been monogamous since coming under the influence of missionaries over a century ago. At

Snowdrift today it would appear that girls are married at about the age of twenty or perhaps a little earlier, while for boys the age of marriage is much later; at least twenty-eight and probably over thirty in many cases. In the average marriage, the husband is seven or eight years older than his wife. There are only three families in which the wife is older than her husband. As should be clear from the previous discussion, men do not put any particular value on their prospective wives being virgins.

It is difficult to determine how much initiative with regard to marriage lies with the prospective marriage partners themselves. No informants would state that there is any such thing as a preferential marriage partner. A few young men, however, maintained that it would be 'bad' to marry a cousin. There appeared, nevertheless, to be numerous cases of premarital sexual relations between first cousins. Several young informants mentioned that if they wanted to marry a particular girl they would first have to secure permission from her father. Although it is certain that marriages are, to some extent, arranged, it is not always clear just who the responsible individuals are. Some informants stated that the old women were very powerful in this regard and that many marriages were arranged by them. Certainly this appeared to be the situation in one particular case when a young man who had been the acknowledged suitor of one girl suddenly married another. In talking about it afterwards, the young man said that his grandmother had decided that it was time for him to be married, and since the girl he was interested in was out of the village at the time, he married the only other girl available. This decision, over which he seems to have had little or no control, did not particularly disturb him. On the other hand, a girl's father apparently has at least some say in the matter, even if it is only to act as a front for the old women. The Roman Catholic priest, who visits the village periodically, told the author about a girl who had come to him saying that her father wished to marry her to a particular boy, but she did not want to go through with the marriage because she did not like him. The priest confronted the father with this information, and he agreed not to insist on the marriage. He said that the old women of both families were the ones who had been insisting on the marriage. Whatever may be the case, it seems certain that young men do not have a completely free hand in choosing mates. The restricted number of girls available has already been seen to be one complicating factor, and there seems little doubt that the wishes of older members of the families involved can be another.

Marriages are performed by the Catholic priest on one of his periodic visits to the village. Sometimes there are two or three couples to be married, but one ceremony is usually sufficient. A wedding which took place in September 1961 was described to the author some months later. The ceremony was held at 8:00 A.M., after which the married couple visited at every home in the community. Usually there was home brew or something else to drink at each house. In the evening a feast was held at the home of the groom's maternal uncle, where friends and relatives gave presents to the married couple. Following the feast, there was a dance held at the school.

Although it was difficult to obtain detailed information about cases of infidelity and extra-marital sexual activity, there could be no doubt that

these occur. The large number of unmarried men and the scarcity of unmarried young women are undoubtedly contributing factors to this situation. Young men frequently talked in general terms about certain women who would be available for sexual purposes when their husbands were away from the village. Several inquired of the author about the possibility of using his cabin as a place for illicit meetings. One woman, whose husband was in the hospital at Calgary, acted as a sort of family sexual partner for his brothers, three of whom were over twenty and not married, in return for assistance in maintaining the household. This arrangement ceased, however, when the husband returned from the hospital. As will be discussed in some detail later, drinking intoxicants is very closely tied in with the need for sexual satisfaction, and whatever resentment is shown by wronged husbands usually appears when they are under the influence of alcohol. When a man comes back from a hunting trip or in from the trap-line and hears that his wife has been unfaithful during his absence, he frequently says nothing but will immediately make a batch of home brew and invite the man who has wronged him. This invitation will be solely for the purpose of getting drunk and fighting with his rival. Some men, however, realize that they are not physically able to uphold their honour in this way and will either do nothing or punish their wives. One informant told the author that he had been sleeping with another man's wife for more than two years, during which time the man had never spoken to him. When drunk, this particular wronged husband would beat his wife.

Divorce or, more correctly, separation was common among the aboriginal Chipewyan, so much so in fact that until the first child was born the marriage was mostly looked upon as a trial (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 68). Hearne (1958, p. 201) mentions that permanent separation could be caused by unfaithfulness on the part of the wife or by her failure to be able to carry out wifely duties satisfactorily. The girl was simply turned out and told to return to her relatives. In recent years at Snowdrift there have been no actual divorces because the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize divorce. There is one separated couple. The husband left his wife and is living with relatives. The wife, who was childless, moved in with a single man and has had several children by him. It cannot be said that this couple suffers socially from the fact that they are living together without the sanction of the Church.

ADULT LIFE

Entry into adult status is difficult to determine even though it usually is directly associated with marriage. As previously mentioned, some young married couples retain their contacts with their unmarried counterparts and share the same interests, while others soon become interested in adult affairs and occupied with adult activities. The speed with which a young married man becomes an adult largely depends upon the extent to which he is responsible for the welfare of his family. Even under the best of circumstances, marriage rarely, if ever, means complete independence for the new family. Though the age of marriage for men is relatively late, they are seldom experienced enough to maintain their families without depending heavily on assistance from relatives.

The early years of marriage appear to be a somewhat difficult time for women. Household chores are considerably more arduous than before marriage, and added to these are the duties of child-care. Since the preferred type of residence is neolocal, the young married couples usually have all the responsibilities of maintaining a household. This again is apt to be more difficult for the women who, as a rule, assume these responsibilities at a much earlier age than the men. In some ways the activities of adult men are less varied than those of the women. Hunting and trapping consume a large part of every day at certain times of the year and strictly follow the pattern of the seasonal cycle. Women work long hours at home at varied tasks and with numerous interruptions of one kind or another.

Ideally, the objectives of the family are achieved by just and harmonious cooperation between husband and wife. As in other cultures, there are households in which there is continual quarrelling and dislike between marriage partners. Often it appears that most disagreements occur in the early years of marriage and that marital problems are largely solved by middle life. Family quarrels often involve infidelities or suspected infidelities on the part of the wife and nearly always take place when one or both individuals have been drinking. Many men become quarrelsome after a certain stage in their alcoholic intake, and at such times they may berate their wives for a variety of reasons. Usually they are repentant after the intoxication wears off. As previously indicated, arguments of this kind very frequently involve physical violence, usually on the part of the husband, but sometimes by both marriage partners. It would be unwise, however, to distort the reality of family life at Snowdrift by over-emphasizing the relatively few but spectacular instances when cooperation and understanding between marriage partners break down. Much more common seem to be the harmonious households in which mutual understanding and toleration are successfully achieved. In most households, family activities are discussed by a man and his wife, and, for the most part, a common social life is shared by them.

Visiting is nearly as important for adult married couples as it is for young unmarried people. A man and his wife may do their visiting individually or, more frequently, as a couple. When people visit as couples it is very likely for the purpose of playing cards. A couple who visit may spend the entire evening at one house, while those individuals who visit alone will be likely to call at a number of houses in the course of an evening. Snowdrift families generally like to do things as a group. The previously mentioned picnics on Sunday during the summer months are characteristic of a community in which family ties are close. This is particularly true of families where the children are young.

OLD AGE

The transition from adult life to old age is not a clear one at Snowdrift. In general, parents whose children are grown and married are not necessarily chronologically old. Chipewyan men age very late in terms of appearance, and they remain active until a relatively advanced age. For women the menopause comes between forty and fifty. Information from women on sexual subjects was almost impossible to obtain, but it appears that they

are not bothered too much by the menopause, and it is not a particularly important period in their lives. If there is a difference in individual reactions to this period, it doubtless has a psychological basis, or it may reflect the presence or absence of physiological difficulties. Although anyone over fifty may occasionally be referred to as an 'old man' or an 'old woman,' an individual who is over sixty-five and is therefore receiving a monthly old age assistance cheque, will definitely be considered old by the villagers.

Hearne reported that old age was a difficult time for the Chipewyan with whom he travelled, because when men and women became too old to work they were treated with disrespect. He also documents abandonment of the aged and estimates that one-half of the old people of both sexes perished in this manner (Hearne, 1958, p. 221). Godsell also reports this fact and was under the impression that abandonment of the aged probably occurred with greater frequency among the Chipewyan than among the Eskimos (1938, p. 250).

Hearne's comment about lack of respect for the aged seems to hold true at Snowdrift today. In ordinary conversations, people frequently made disrespectful comments about elderly individuals. Several informants were asked if they would like to hear such comments made about themselves when they were old, and they shrugged their shoulders and said they would not care. It was also noticed that when old people ask questions of younger people, they often receive disrespectful answers or, at best, short replies made in an off-hand, disrespectful tone of voice. Young men seemed to enjoy making unkind statements to the author about old people and in their presence. These statements were, of course, made in English so that the old person would not be able to understand. Physical defects in the aged, such as impaired hearing, would inspire scornful comments. In fact, among the Snowdrift Indians it would almost appear as though anything old is an object of scorn. A dog is given an extra kick with the comment that it is old; a tourist fisherman is thought of as being rather peculiar, not because he is white and oddly dressed, but because he is old. If old persons happen to have retained their mental powers and physical abilities to a marked degree, they may still be objects of scorn, but there will be a note of awe in any comments that are made about them. In this connection, it is felt that an aged person should either admit his inability to carry out his usual activities and thus become a burden, or else he should be able to perform them without assistance of any kind. On numerous occasions the author observed old people attempting to perform a task well beyond their physical capabilities, but no one would lift a hand to help them.

It might be expected that old age assistance would raise the status of old people, but it has done so only to the extent that it is possible for some of them to maintain their own households and thus not be dependent on younger relatives. Lip service may be paid to the desirability of taking care of a person in his old age, but there is a definite impression that statements of this kind are made because the Indian knows that white people expect this kind of attitude. Thus, if an aged person is alone and not in a position to maintain a separate household, he or she will be tolerated only for the sake of obtaining the pension money. In one case where an old couple was maintaining a separate household, their married son had been

doing his best to persuade them to move in with him. When questioned about the matter, the son maintained that he was anxious to help and take care of his parents. The elderly parents, however, told an entirely different story. They once did live with him, and he spent their old age pension cheques on things for himself, and they received little or nothing.

Problems of inheritance are handled loosely in the village as old people often make their wishes known before they die. If this is not the case, the children generally get together after the death and divide the material possessions that are left. Whether this division is always equal could not be determined. There was a definite impression, however, that the oldest male relatives were the favoured inheritors. It should be emphasized that inheritance can take many forms and may relate to a great variety of factors. One informant reported that when his grandfather died, his boat and much of his hunting equipment were inherited by the informant's paternal uncle. At the time of the grandfather's death, the informant's father was already dead, and the children were all too young to claim the inheritance that was rightfully theirs. Later, the uncle's sister's husband inherited the canoe and hunting equipment belonging to the uncle's father because the uncle was already well provided for. It seems likely that most problems of inheritance are worked out with a minimum of friction. This was apparently not always the case among the aboriginal Chipewyan. Penard (1929, p. 22) reports that if a deceased hunter left only young orphans, their rights were often disregarded, and the only redress they had was to resort to force, when they became physically capable of it, to obtain what was rightfully theirs.

In spite of the generally low status that old people have, it must be stated that Snowdrift people are not particularly depressed by old age, nor by the thought of approaching old age, unless they are in poor health. Although all the village old people are occasionally mistreated and used, they are adequately provided for economically, and even the oldest keep themselves busy with light chores around the house or with sitting and visiting.

DEATH AND BURIAL

Death is regarded as a normal event at Snowdrift, and mourning is restrained and is, for the most part, private; this does not seem to have been characteristic of aboriginal Chipewyan attitudes about death. Franklin, in describing five families of Chipewyan Indians which his party encountered near Lake Athabasca, reported that

this band of Indians had recently destroyed everything they possessed as a token of their grief for the loss of their relatives in the prevailing sickness. It appears that no article is spared by these unhappy men when a near relative dies; their clothes and tents are cut to pieces, their guns broken, and every other weapon rendered useless, if some person does not remove these articles from their sight, which is seldom done (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 206).

Mackenzie (1801, p. cxxviii-cxxix), Curtis (1928, vol. 18, p. 44), Hearne (1958, p. 218-19), and Thompson (Tyrrell, 1916, p. 130-31) report similar occurrences, and there can be no doubt that death was a time for public display and show of feelings. The aboriginal Chipewyan never buried their dead but wrapped them in skins and left them on the ground where they

would presumably be eaten by wild animals and birds (Hearne, 1958, p. 218-19; Curtis, 1928, vol. 18, p. 44; Godsell, 1938, p. 250). Hearne states that for this reason the people would never eat foxes, wolves, or ravens unless it was absolutely necessary (Hearne, 1958, p. 218-19).

Ideas about death and after-life held by Snowdrift Indians today are essentially simplified versions of those of the Roman Catholic Church. All persons who die are believed to go directly to heaven where they enjoy eternal life free from the worries and cares of this world. Living people believe that they will see their dead relatives in the other world. However death and the after-life are not common subjects for conversation. The Indians very infrequently speculate about their own deaths or the deaths of others. Several informants mentioned that the deaths of close relatives had an important influence on their lives, usually in the direction of greater self-reliance and stability. One informant said that since his father died he had made home brew only twice and had tried to be a better provider for his family.

During the summer of 1961 an elderly woman died after a lengthy illness during which people had frequently commented on how tough she was and how it might be better if she would die. As soon as her death was generally known, a number of older women came to her house and began sewing the shroud. The body was wrapped in a blanket immediately after death and remained lying on the bed until it was placed in a coffin the following day. Construction of the coffin by close male relatives of the deceased had taken place on the day of the death. The dead woman's son estimated that the funeral would cost him approximately \$80. This included new clothes for the deceased, plywood for the coffin, coloured cloth and ribbon to cover the coffin and food at the cemetery for the family and other close relatives of the deceased. On the day the coffin was constructed, a small feast was given for close relatives and those who had helped with preparations for the burial. Some of these expenses were charged to the Indian Affairs Branch, which usually assists in situations of this kind.

The morning of the second day after the death, close relatives of the deceased carried the coffin from the house to the church. The priest, recently arrived in the village, conducted a short service, after which the coffin was placed in a canoe in preparation for the trip to the cemetery at the mouth of the Snowdrift River. Six canoes assembled in front of the village, in the first of which was the coffin, the priest, and another individual who sat in the bow holding the wooden cross decorated with ribbons that was to go on the grave. The second canoe contained members of the immediate family; the others carried the remaining thirty-five people who made the two-hour trip to the cemetery. A grave was dug, and after a brief burial service the coffin was lowered into it and the grave filled. Following the burial, everyone present held a picnic, and the boats then returned to the village.

Earlier during the same summer a three-year-old boy drowned when he fell from the dock in front of the federal school. His funeral, which was held in the absence of the priest, while basically similar to the one previously described, was notable for a few differences. When the funeral party arrived at the cemetery, which had not been visited since the last death had taken place early the previous winter, several men began digging the grave while

all others began to clean up the cemetery. Small trees and bushes were cut down to clear the area around the graves. Then people set to work cutting the weeds and restoring the graves to a clean, neat condition. Many of the small wooden crosses had fallen down; these they either placed upright again or laid on the graves. Green birch leaves were then spread on all the graves, and a number of people placed religious medals and figurines on the graves of relatives.

For this funeral, the coffin, which was painted blue and decorated with strips of ribbon and little floral designs made from ribbon, was left open. At the request of the parents of the deceased, the coffin was stood up on end with the lid removed so that pictures could be taken. The body of the small boy was wrapped in a piece of flannelette which was removed for the pictures. The deceased was dressed in a new jacket, and his hands were crossed on his chest. After the pictures had been taken and the coffin closed and placed on the ground once more, all those present knelt around it while one of the older men led in the responsive reading of prayers and chants. Then they again removed the lid of the coffin, and the mother of the deceased leaned over and kissed her son, followed by other members of the family and friends who wished to do so. The piece of flannelette was placed over the body as before, covering the face, and the lid was nailed closed. The coffin, after being sprinkled with holy water, was lowered into the grave, and a handful of dirt was thrown on the coffin by everyone present. The grave was filled in, and at its head was placed a carefully made wooden cross which bore the name of the deceased, the date of death, and the words "rest in peace." A religious medal and a small cluster of paper flowers were hung on the cross. One informant told the author of having seen some graves at Fort Reliance where a man's pipe, a little tobacco, and a knife were placed in a small beaver skin pouch and hung on the cross. This was apparently done in recent years for the graves of very old men.

There are three cemeteries in the vicinity of Snowdrift and at least one near Fort Reliance. Two of those in the Snowdrift area are no longer used and have fallen into considerable disrepair. People feel very strongly about being buried in a cemetery. An informant said that his mother had died when the family was in the bush and that since they did not want to bury her there the coffin was taken by dog-team to a cemetery at Fort Reliance. This was a long trip involving several days in both directions.

The attitude of close relatives throughout funeral proceedings appears to be one of restrained grief. Those not closely related to the deceased seem to take a detached interest in the proceedings and frankly enjoy the picnic that follows. Everyone is genuinely sorry for bereaved individuals, particularly when the deceased is a child or a person cut off in the prime of life, but they do not allow this to interfere with enjoyment of what is essentially a community social occasion.

Informants could remember no suicides in the village or in the surrounding area. One old man, when questioned on the matter, said that he had not heard of a person taking his own life either at Fort Smith or in any of the villages around Great Slave Lake.

CHAPTER SIX

Social Structure and Community Life

KINSHIP AND THE FAMILY

Collecting information about the kinship system at Snowdrift proved to be extremely difficult. As previously mentioned, it was noted that in most cases of social interaction between two individuals personal names are used to a much greater extent than kinship terms, and it is clear that there has been a general loss of knowledge about the kinship system. It was certainly true that there were few individuals who could give even a reasonably complete set of kin terms. Although the author has a reasonable amount of faith in the correctness of the terms listed below, it must be admitted that they were obtained by combining the information given by three Indian informants and the Roman Catholic priest. A marked lack of interest characterized the responses of most informants to questions concerning the kinship system and kinship terminology.

The kin terms listed below are referential as to use and are assumed to represent the system or terminology employed by the majority of Indians at Snowdrift. It should be emphasized, however, that the system employed is probably not completely uniform. The transcription of the terms represents only a working orthography and cannot be considered either strictly phonetic or phonemic.

SNOWDRIFT KIN TERMS AND REFERENTS

Second ascending generation

GrFa	setsiyé
GrMo	setsounné

First ascending generation

Fa	se'ta
FaBr, FaSiHu	sede'ldhene
MoBr, MoSiHu	ser'e
FaSi, MoSi, MoBrWi, FaBrWi	sank'iyé
Mo	enne
Fa-in-L	ser'e
Mo-in-L	setsun

Ego's generation

Hu	sedene
Wi	setsseyané
OlBr	sounnare
YoBr	setchelle

OISi	saré
YoSi	seddezé
FaBrSo, MoSiSo, FaBrDa, MoSiDa, FaSiSo. MoBrSo, FaSiDa, MoBrDa	sella

Affinal relatives in ego's generation

BrWi, WiSi: mn sp	setsun
SiHu, HuBr, BrWi, HuSi: wn sp	setchaye
SiHu, WiBr: mn sp	serre

First descending generation

Son, SiSo, BrSo	sinyeze
Da, BrDa, SiDa	selliyé
SoWi, DaHu: mn sp	saze
SoWi, DaHu: wn sp	setchaye

Second descending generation

GrSo	sounnaraze
GrDa	saréaze

Characteristics of the terminology: ascending generations — Designations for relatives of the second ascending generation adhere to only two criteria, generation and sex of referent. Thus there are only two terms, 'grandfather' and 'grandmother.' Lineality appears to be the main principle utilized in the terminology for relatives of the first ascending generation. The terms for FaSi and MoSi are the same but different from the term for mother. Similarly, the terms for FaBrWi and MoBrWi are the same but different from the term for mother. For the comparable male relatives it is noted that the terms for FaBr and FaSiHu are the same, as are the terms for MoBr and MoSiHu, both terms being different from that for father. The term for Fa-in-L equals that for MoBr, but the term for Mo-in-L is different from that for FaSi.

Descending generations — The second descending generation is grouped by sex with two terms used, one for 'grandson' and another for 'granddaughter.' There are two terms for children, 'son' and 'daughter.' The term for son is extended to SiSo and BrSo, while the term for daughter is likewise extended to BrDa and SiDa. With regard to the designation of children-in-law, it appears that a man employs for SoWi the term he uses for DaHu, while a woman employs a different term in the same way.

Ego's generation — The terms for the primary relatives of ego's generation are 'husband' and 'wife,' which are employed for spouses only, and four sibling terms, 'older brother,' 'younger brother,' 'older sister,' and 'younger sister.' In cousin terminology the sex of the speaker is not a criterion. Cross and parallel cousins are called by a single term that is not applied to any other relative. With regard to siblings-in-law, the sex of the speaker is a criterion. A man employs for BrWi the same term that he uses for WiSi, while a woman extends the term she uses for SoWi and Da to BrWi, HuSi, SiHu, and HuBr. A man uses a single term for SiHu and WiBr.

Because of the doubtful nature of at least some of the kinship material presented above, the author is unwilling to make an exhaustive comparison

with the kinship terminologies of other northern Athapaskan peoples, particularly since much of this comparative material is, in itself, no more reliable. It is sufficient to point out that the principle of lineality, an important characteristic of Snowdrift kinship terminology, is consistent with a bilateral system as is the use of generational terms for nieces and nephews. It will immediately be apparent that the Snowdrift kinship system shows the Eskimo type of cousin terminology as described by Murdock (1949, p. 226-27). The evidence provided by MacNeish's informants suggests that Iroquoian cousin terms may be or have been more characteristic of the Chipewyan as well as of other northern Athapaskans (MacNeish, 1960, p. 280). In this connection, all that can be said for the Snowdrift material is that the distinction between cross and parallel cousins seems to have disappeared and that this is possibly a reflection of the acculturation process which has resulted in the loss of significant behavioural distinctions between certain categories of relatives. With regard to the possibility that forms of marriage can be determinants of terminology, it is worth mentioning that Curtis (1928, vol. 18, p. 41) and Eggan (1955, p. 541) assign patrilineal cross-cousin marriage to the Chipewyan. According to Eggan, at least, this was coupled with matrilineal residence; both authors emphasize that a man regarded his son-in-law as the support in his old age, and relations between them were somewhat ceremonious and restrained. As previously mentioned, although informants at Snowdrift, when questioned directly on the matter, denied knowledge of any preferential marriage customs, it seems at least possible that there has been a bilateral extension of the incest taboos to include all cousins. If this were indeed the case, it would provide a partial explanation of the disappearance of the terminological distinction between cross and parallel cousins.

Snowdrift social structure, as indicated by the kinship terminology, is further characterized by bilateral descent, and the residence pattern in the village is predominantly neolocal. Of the twenty-six residential units in 1961, twenty-one consisted of nuclear families with perhaps one or two aged relatives, orphaned children, or unmarried brothers and sisters. Two additional nuclear families had a married sister of the family head and her husband living with them, but both of these couples expected to build cabins in the near future. One old man lived by himself as did another young unmarried man. Another household contained two nuclear families, the male heads of which were cousins. It is generally the case that a young married couple will seldom set up a separate residence during the first year or two of their marriage. Instead they will normally live with the side of the family that is best equipped to receive them. As mentioned previously, this form of temporary bilocal residence is instrumental in helping a young man to adjust to heading a family. It should be emphasized, however, that neolocal residence is very much the ideal of every married couple; they will attempt to build a house of their own as soon after marriage as they can.

Several of the larger nuclear families, which contain a number of unmarried but adult men, are extremely fluid as far as residence is concerned. A good example is a family containing five unmarried brothers over the age of twenty. Theoretically, the boys are all members of the same nuclear residential unit, but in actual practice it is seldom that more than two are in residence. The others may stay with various relatives, particularly with their paternal

uncles or with an older married brother. This family considers itself to be one unit, but in reality it is a very diverse unit and is closely integrated with the nuclear families of close relatives in the village. The question is, how do the various members of a diverse nuclear family such as the one described above feel about their obligations toward one another? This is difficult to say, but the author is under the impression that the obligations which the sons in this family feel toward their father are no greater than those which they feel toward some of their other close relatives. That is, they do not identify entirely with the core of the nuclear unit. At the risk of over-emphasizing a point that has been made before, it is worth mentioning that families such as this one are apt to be more closely structured economically than they are socially. This is due to the previously mentioned prevailing right that a family head considers he has the right to the earnings of his unmarried children who, at least nominally, live with him. In the case of the family under discussion, there are two younger sons who operate fully within the framework of the nuclear family, while the older boys, as has been shown, are progressively outside the family for many things, particularly residence, travel, work, and so on. And yet the total is a more closely knit economic unit than might be expected.

Murdock has postulated that with the Eskimo type of kinship terminology one can expect to find no exogamous unilinear kin groups. Snowdrift is a community which is characterized for the most part by village endogamy, and as a result it is not segmented by unilineal consanguineal groupings of kinsmen. Within the community the only social structuring is into families, and except for the family ties the strongest sense of identification is with the community as a whole. Murdock refers to this type of grouping as a 'deme' (1949, p. 63), and it seems likely that Snowdrift represents a grouping of this kind even though the community as such is a very recent phenomenon. Many families can trace their relationship to one another through intermarriage, and it is almost certain that all the families in the community are related to one another even though they are not always able to trace the exact kinship connections. Because the village is made up of families from many different places in the Great Slave Lake - Lake Athabasca area, the ramifications of kinship ties are complex. Occasionally a man from Fort Resolution or some other community in the area visits Snowdrift, and invariably he is related to many people in the village. It seems likely that any community in the area, no matter how recently formed, would immediately come to exhibit all the qualifications of a deme.

In connection with this discussion of kinship, it seems advisable to say something about concepts of sharing and reciprocal relationships since they are, to some extent, a reflection of community life and the acculturation situation. It was noted that with regard to the killing of moose and caribou there is complete and indiscriminate sharing of the meat. When a villager kills a moose, a representative of every family will pay him a visit and come away with a share of the animal. In one case, a successful moose hunter was observed to distribute his catch almost as soon as his boat landed at the village and to retain only a relatively small share for himself. Another hunter informed the author that by the time he had given every family a piece of moose meat, there was very little for him to put in the freezer.

This same indiscriminate sharing appears also to apply to fish; people were frequently observed requesting fish if they had been unsuccessful with their own nets. It should be emphasized that the sharing of both fish and big game takes place irrespective of relationship.¹ With regard to smaller game, however, it seems to be the case that a man will claim only those animals which he himself has killed. During the summer, as previously mentioned, it is common for two or three men to hunt together for hares near the village. The author frequently accompanied hunters on these trips, and it was invariably the case that at the end of the day's hunt each hunter claimed the animals which he had killed even though one hunter might have been markedly more successful than another (*see Helm, 1961, p. 81-82*).

It has already been demonstrated that this pattern of sharing equally the products of the hunt does not apply to trapping partnerships, nor does it seem to apply to many community activities except the hunting of big game. The ordinary reciprocal relationships which might be expected to exist in a village that is essentially made up of related individuals have broken down before the tendency for individuals to buy, sell, and borrow goods and services. This tendency applies to everyone in the community, no matter how closely related, and has resulted in a strong emphasis on individual as opposed to collective effort. This emphasis was clearly illustrated during the summer of 1961 when the Agency Superintendent was making efforts to encourage certain families to fulfil promises with regard to the house building program. His idea was that all the men who had promised to build houses would work together cutting logs. None of the Indians participating in the program favoured this procedure, and each man began cutting his own logs. When one man gave up his intention of building a house, he sold the logs that he had cut to his brother, who was also cutting logs for a house. Another man hired two men for \$5 a day to help him cut logs. The interesting point here is that even close relatives are frequently paid for goods and services, and, in many kinds of dealings, buying and selling have come to be the accepted substitutes for the principle of reciprocity.

Another significant factor is a highly developed complex of borrowing that is almost universally condemned by the villagers and yet is practised to a greater or lesser degree by almost everyone (*see Helm, 1961, p. 83-84*). Much of this consists in the borrowing of material possessions and is essentially reciprocal. One individual will lend gasoline to another who wishes to take his family on a picnic. Later on, the first man may borrow the second man's canoe if his is being repaired or being used by tourist fishermen. Individuals who do not repay loans of this kind become objects of derision and after a while will be unable to borrow any more. The borrowing of money and store food is also highly developed and may not be quite so reciprocal. Many informants insisted that one of the reasons people hang around the store is to see what others are buying so that they will know from whom to borrow. Frequently a person will lose money playing cards and then will attempt to borrow in order to keep playing. This kind of borrowing is nearly always successful, and although the borrower may repay the loan more often than not, the reciprocal nature of the transaction is

¹This seems to be a general characteristic of northern Athapaskan peoples (*See Helm, 1961, p. 84; Helm and Lurie, 1961, p. 87; Honigsmann, 1946, p. 105; 1949, p. 65*).

absent. This is reflected in the tendency for those who win money at cards to leave most of it with the Hudson's Bay Company manager so that they can, when approached, truthfully say that they have nothing to lend. It cannot, therefore, be said that concepts of private ownership actually conflict with aboriginal patterns of sharing. Rather it would appear that the concept of individual effort was deeply rooted in traditional Chipewyan culture and may have been strengthened by the recent changes in economy and settlement patterns. On the other hand, the sharing of the important resources of the environment is also a deeply rooted principle that will be significant as long as subsistence activities remain important.

FORMAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

All the historical sources indicate that leadership was poorly developed among the aboriginal Chipewyan and that this lack of development appears to be directly related to the very rudimentary form of organization that existed beyond the nuclear or expanded family. Informants indicated that the foremost qualification necessary for a leader was that he be a good hunter. Such a person would assume a leader's role by gathering around him families with less capable hunters, usually, but not necessarily, related. Franklin (1824, vol. 1, p. 206-208) mentions coming upon a group of five families near Lake Athabasca who recognized the leadership of an old hunter who was skilled in locating caribou. This seems to have been about the maximum size for these groups, and it should be emphasized that the authority of the group leader was based entirely upon his personality and hunting ability. If a leader was not satisfied with a hunter who joined his band, he apparently had the power to send him and his family away. Similarly, any hunter who associated himself and his family with a hunting leader of recognized ability was always free to separate himself from the band he had joined; he would either put himself under the leadership of another man or do his hunting as an individual family (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 66; Penard, 1929, p. 22).¹

After trading posts were established in Chipewyan territory, the traders endeavoured to designate chiefs or to reinforce the authority of those who traditionally commanded respect as a result of hunting prowess in order to encourage trapping and to establish a convenient method of dealing with the Indians for furs. Presents were given to these individuals in the hope that they would use whatever influence they had to see that furs were brought to the posts at a certain time and in sufficient numbers to satisfy the demands of the fur trade. Franklin describes the ways in which the traders bestowed recognition on certain individuals who, without the approval of the Indians, would allow themselves to be recognized as chiefs. When a trading company chief approached a fort, the flag would be hoisted and a salute fired. The chief would then halt at some distance from the fort and dispatch one of his young relatives to announce his approach. The messenger would carry back to him some vermilion to ornament the faces of his party, a looking glass, a

¹For a detailed discussion of traditional leadership among northern Athapaskans, see MacNeish, 1956.

comb, some tobacco, and a few rounds of ammunition so that the party of Indians might return the salute (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 246-47).

Once the Hudson's Bay Company had secured a monopoly throughout the western area of Chipewyan territory, this ritual gradually declined. Whatever leadership existed continued to be vested in the skilled hunters, and although an increasingly sedentary life and the importance of trapping have resulted in few subsistence activities that include individuals outside the nuclear family, vestiges of the old leadership pattern are still to be seen. Some of the trapping partnerships at Snowdrift reflect the tendency for young, relatively inexperienced trappers to associate themselves with older, more experienced ones. One such trapper, who has consistently had the best trapping record in the village over the past five years, traps each year with a different young man. It is significant, however, that this man's acknowledged ability, though it provokes the admiration of other trappers, does not enable him to exercise leadership outside the area of his particular skill.

As mentioned previously, Snowdrift is in the area covered by Treaty No. 11, which was signed with the Canadian Government in 1921. All the residents of Snowdrift are now members of the Yellowknife 'A' band following a reorganization which took place late in 1960. Band organization and some of the activities of the Agency Superintendent have already been discussed. In this section relations between the Superintendent and the villagers will be discussed with a view to determining how leadership patterns have changed under the influence of band organization and changing settlement patterns.

Although the frequency with which the Agency Superintendent visits the village from his headquarters in Yellowknife is dependent upon a variety of factors, it is seldom, even in winter, that more than two months elapse between visits. He does not hold a meeting of the band every time he comes, but he does try to do so whenever there is important business to discuss that is of interest to the entire village. At other times he will confine his activities to talks with the chief, councillors, and any other individuals who wish to see him.

In August of 1961 the Agency Superintendent came to the village for the express purpose of holding a band meeting to elect a chief and to discuss the house building program. The first item of business had been made necessary by the resignation of the chief after a series of quarrels with the Superintendent. This band meeting, which was attended by the author at the invitation of one of the councillors, will be described in some detail even though there is some question whether it can be considered typical. At any rate, the opinions expressed and the matters brought up for discussion are similar to those that would occur at most meetings. The meeting was scheduled for 1:00 P.M. in the school, but people were slow to arrive. It was almost two o'clock when the Superintendent decided to begin the meeting, but there were only fifteen people present; later the number rose to twenty-one. Although there is no age or sex rule with regard to who can attend band meetings, it was observed that there were few men in attendance below the age of twenty-two. A number of women stood around outside the school while the meeting was in progress, but none actually came in to take an active part. Women do occasionally attend the meetings, but they practically never have anything to say.

At this meeting, both councillors were present, but the feeling was against

electing a chief because of the small number of band members present. The Superintendent worked through an interpreter who was inadequate since he failed to interpret all the comments made by various individuals who wished to take part in the discussion. The senior councillor, having previously been a sub-chief before band reorganization, considered himself to be the spokesman for the people but seemed more interested in obtaining privileges for himself than in helping the village which he represented. In fact, it was generally noted that nearly all the comments and questions from the floor took the form of specific requests for help. There seemed to be a minimum of interest in general village improvement. For example, the senior councillor requested assistance for the coming trapping season. The Superintendent explained the rules for trapping assistance which stipulate that a person must be a full-time trapper with good equipment who is willing to spend most of his time in the bush. There seemed to be little understanding on the part of those present that these conditions would rule out aid to just about all Snowdrift trappers. A band member then requested a new net for himself, but the Superintendent explained that the Branch no longer had any new ones to distribute. He pointed out that nets had been distributed two years previously but that they had not been cared for properly. Several band members denied this, and the general impression was that the Superintendent could get nets if he wanted them, simply by asking his 'boss' for them. This revealed another general attitude on the part of the people; namely, that the Superintendent has complete control over largess to be distributed to the village and can obtain anything he wants simply by asking his 'boss' in Ottawa. Thus, any objections to requests by the villagers are interpreted as pure stubbornness on the Superintendent's part.

When the house-building program came up for discussion, the Superintendent expressed annoyance that no logs had as yet been hauled, even though the summer was nearly over. Some Indians countered with the comment that the lumber, which was to be provided by the Indian Affairs Branch, had not yet arrived. The Superintendent, however, expressed the opinion that this was simply being used as an excuse, saying that he would return in a week, and if logs were not hauled by that time the entire program would be abandoned and ration payments called off. Some men began to leave, and when the Agent indicated that he did not wish to talk about anything else, the meeting came to an end. Outside the school, several men sought out the Superintendent and said that they would begin hauling logs. In fact, it seems that most Snowdrift men would rather talk to the Superintendent in private; this is perhaps not surprising when it is remembered that few individuals wish to discuss matters pertaining to general village welfare.

At most band meetings several individuals will appear requesting relief food and clothing, information about summer employment opportunities, pensions, and trapping assistance. In fact, it probably would not be an exaggeration to say that matters of this kind are practically the only interest of the villagers as far as their relations with the Indian Affairs Branch are concerned. Suggestions on the part of the Superintendent involving cooperative community effort are invariably met with little enthusiasm.

Since the institution of chief is a relatively recent innovation among the Chipewyan, dating only from the time the treaties were signed, and at Snow-

drift is linked with a recent shift in settlement pattern, it seems advisable to examine the whole concept more closely and, particularly, to attempt to discover what the villagers expect of their chief and also what the Agency Superintendent expects of him. Prior to band reorganization in late 1960, Snowdrift residents, most of whom were members of the Yellowknife 'A' band, had no chief but were represented in their dealings with the Indian Affairs Branch by two councillors. The chief of the band was resident in Rocher River. Snowdrift people, however, considered one of these councillors to be their chief and the other a sub-chief. It is, of course, true that these offices were created for the sole purpose of providing the Agency Superintendent with village representatives with whom he could deal and who would, presumably, be able to speak for the entire village. The people recognize this, and they also tend to see the chief and sub-chief in this role. The chief, then, is expected to act in a liaison capacity with outsiders, particularly Euro-Canadians and specifically the Agency Superintendent. Neither the chief nor the sub-chief can be said to have any authority over the daily life of the people; the ideal chief is one who does not interfere with the lives of individuals but who stands up to the Agency Superintendent and helps the villagers to get as much as they can in the way of assistance from the Indian Affairs Branch (*see* Honigmann, 1949, p. 148).

There is general agreement on the part of the villagers as to what role the chief should have, but they are by no means agreed on what the methods should be for achieving this goal. The selection of the two individuals who occupied the positions of sub-chief and chief before band reorganization appears to be an expression of the ambivalent attitude that the people have toward their relations with Euro-Canadians, and to reflect the fact that they really do not know what is the best way to approach them in order to get the things they want. The sub-chief reflects the easy approach embodied in an individual who has been very successful in adapting to certain aspects of Euro-Canadian culture. Many villagers, however, do not think much of the sub-chief because they feel that he does not stand up strongly enough to the Agency Superintendent. He may agree that certain things are going to be requested from the Superintendent, but he then lets the Superintendent talk him into taking a different attitude toward the problems. Thus many people feel that he betrays their interests to the Superintendent. The chief, on the other hand, represents the villagers who feel that a tough policy must be adopted in all dealings with the Agency Superintendent and other Euro-Canadians, and he believes strongly that a tough policy is the only kind of policy that will get the villagers what they want. The Agency Superintendent openly prefers dealing with the sub-chief, and this further convinces some people that this person is not emphasizing the interests of the villagers as much as he ought to be. There can be no doubt that the attitude represented by the chief is the most popular one; this fact was made clear, when, at the time of the elections after band reorganization, the old chief was elected chief of the Yellowknife 'A' band. The continued importance of the opposite faction was also reaffirmed when the old sub-chief was elected one of the two band councillors. The second band councillor, although a much older man than the other two, appears to subscribe to the chief's attitude.

The chief and councillors have some difficulty in establishing themselves as meaningful figures in the village. Any failure on their part to recognize that their authority is limited to dealing with Euro-Canadians is quickly resented by the villagers. When an Indian is faced with a situation in which he sees himself as possibly being forced to do something that he does not want to do, he is almost certain to make some comment to the effect that he is his own boss and that no one can tell him what to do.¹ The old sub-chief incurred much of his unpopularity by attempting to tell people how to regulate their lives according to what he considered to be right and wrong. At a feast held following the return of fire fighters in early August 1961, he made a speech to the effect that he thought there had been too much drinking the previous night and told people not to carry brew around with them, but, if they did make it, to drink it at home in relative privacy. Most people objected to this bit of preaching, pointing out that the councillor himself had been one of the most intoxicated individuals the preceding evening.

There is another factor that makes it difficult for the chief to assert his authority. It is the general tendency for visiting government officials to ignore the existence of the chief and councillors and to deal directly with the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the federal school teacher. In most cases these visitors do not know who the chief is, and it never occurs to them to inquire for him. As has been shown, the only government official who deals directly with the chief is the Agency Superintendent; thus, in a sense, the chief becomes a sort of puppet for the Superintendent. This situation becomes increasingly important as the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources has more to do with the village. Since the institution of the chief is not a creation of Northern Affairs, it does not occur to their representatives to work through him. For example, in August 1961 two officials from that Department arrived in the village to assess the feasibility of drilling wells. This program would have been of definite interest to the chief, councillors, and other villagers. The well-drilling experts were met at the dock by the Hudson's Bay Company manager to whom they detailed the reason for their visit. Then they went about their business, completed the survey, got on the plane, and departed without anyone in the village knowing why they had come or who they were. Under these conditions it is not possible for elected village officials to feel very useful or for the villagers to develop much interest in programs being planned for their welfare.

Relations between the chief and the Agency Superintendent tend to be complicated by the fact that neither understands the authority and limitations of authority of the other. The Superintendent expects that the chief will be helpful and cooperative at all times, that he will be available for consultation whenever the Superintendent comes to the village, and that he will speak for the community as a whole, working to spread and make understandable the ideas and directives of the Superintendent. When the chief adopts a truculent attitude, as he frequently does, and appears not to take his duties seriously, or when he attempts to further his own wishes instead of appearing interested in community affairs, the Superintendent may complain at a band meeting that the village is not well represented by its leader. The chief, on the other hand,

¹This strong individualistic attitude has been noted for other northern Athapaskans (see Mason, 1946, p. 43; Honigmann, 1946, p. 128; 1949, p. 250-58; Helm, 1961, p. 174).

feels that the Superintendent should visit the village much more frequently than he does because there are always things that go wrong which should be discussed; people are hungry, the fishing is bad, and so on. He is convinced that the Superintendent has a lot of money and can remedy these situations if he chooses to do so. Actually, neither the chief nor anyone else has a really clear idea just what the Superintendent would do if he did come every month, but there is the general feeling that some good could be accomplished, that money would be distributed, and that all problems would be solved. The duties of the Superintendent, his obligations to communities other than Snowdrift, and the limitations of his power are completely unknown. He is simply the representative of a great, unknown force called 'government' that has a great deal of money. Only through the Superintendent can this unknown force be persuaded to give some of its money to the Indians.

Throughout this report Snowdrift has been continually referred to as a community, and it has been shown that the chief and councillors are considered by the Indian Affairs Branch to be the elected representatives of the community. It has also been shown that these officials cannot be considered true village leaders in any sense of the term since their authority is limited to dealings with the Agency Superintendent and other Euro-Canadians. Therefore, it must be said that as far as formal community organization is concerned, it almost never operates with regard to strictly local situations involving various individuals living within the community. The residents of the community presumably can be said to recognize their tie with the community next to their kinship ties, and yet community members practically never join in any work for the community as a whole. There are no leaders who can organize activity for the general welfare and improvement of the village. The community, therefore, can be said to function as a unit only in the most minimal sense. Money is collected for an occasional feast; a dance or two may be organized during the course of a summer; band members are assembled for a band meeting; but this is as close as the community ever gets to functioning as a unit.

In spite of the fact that formal community organization is minimal, a sense of community can definitely be said to exist. There is a definite idea that 'Snowdrift people' form a group distinct from the inhabitants of other villages. This concept of 'Snowdrift people' is mentioned in many different contexts and definitely takes precedence over tribal ties.¹ One informant proudly told the author that the Department of Forestry was very much pleased with the 'Snowdrift people' as fire fighters in contrast to the Indians from Fort Resolution, Rocher River, and Yellowknife, because the people from Snowdrift worked harder, were friendlier, and so on. When the author mentioned to an informant that he had loaned money to various villagers, the informant assured him that he would definitely be repaid in full because 'Snowdrift people' are reliable and always pay their debts. Sometimes it even seems that the villagers share the stereotyped ideas about Indians that they hear from Euro-Canadians and wish to except themselves from the stereotype. More probably, they are taking for granted that the author subscribes to the stereotype and are hasten-

¹For discussion of a similar attitude among the Slave Indians at "Lynx Point," see Helm, 1961, p. 49, 55.

ing to assure him that whatever might be the case in other places, 'Snowdrift people' are different.

It might be said, therefore, that continuity of location and kinship ties, together with a developing community identity, could, in time, create a firm foundation for a formal community organization that would be meaningful in terms of the activities and interests of the whole community. It is to be doubted, however, whether a true community leadership can develop out of the existing community organization which is so closely tied to the benefits to be derived from the Indian Affairs Branch. Another factor that is sure to hamper community organization is the unwillingness of most people to take the responsibility of telling others what to do. As mentioned previously, these people do not like to be told what to do, and traditional social organization, which emphasizes the freedom of each individual family and the authority of the family head or, at best, the outstanding hunter in a group of families, seems still to be strongly rooted in the minds of most of them.

Along with this strongly developed individuality is the frequently expressed feeling that although 'Snowdrift people' are better than others, there are 'some people' who cannot be trusted. This general distrust of each other among the villagers is practically never formalized in specific accusations. There are always 'some people' who will not pay back loans and 'some people' who are always looking for trouble. When no fish are found in a net, the statement is always made that perhaps 'someone' has stolen them, even when there is no indication of it. This mutual distrust between villagers is apt to come out particularly in their dealings with Euro-Canadians. Each person wants his dealings with the white man to be more or less secret. Thus any request for assistance, for a loan, or for a commercial transaction of any kind will always be conducted in private. It appears that a good many people are anxious to profit at the expense of other people, and this is the case even between close kinsmen. It is important to stress the fact that this general distrust of each other is nearly always kept well below the surface, and it does not appear to inhibit daily interaction. Nevertheless, particularly as it concerns relations with the Agency Superintendent and other Euro-Canadians, this special manifestation of individualism is certain to be an inhibiting factor in the development of leadership and community organization.

Before leaving the general subject of formal community organization, it is necessary to say something about methods of dealing with anti-social acts and breaches of traditional rules of behaviour. Crimes against the Canadian legal system are, of course, dealt with by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Representatives of this organization make periodic visits to the village, but they seldom have legal matters to deal with. If people are caught making home brew, they are subject to legal action, and persons so unwise as to appear intoxicated while a police constable is in the village may be charged with disturbing the peace. Aside from dealing with these minor offences, the R.C.M. Police have little to do with the village as even moderately serious crimes seldom occur. The community, in spite of its lack of formal organization, has ways of dealing with misdemeanours of a relatively serious nature and ignores for the most part other anti-social acts. For example, the stealing of fish from nets is, apparently, a common practice, and the offenders are well known to everyone. No one, however, is willing to make an issue of this, and

as it does not occur too frequently, it never becomes a major issue. If a man thinks his net has been raided, he may express annoyance, but he will simply attempt to remedy the situation by checking it more frequently. Several informants reported that dog harnesses, traps, and other materials left in the bush were sometimes stolen. Discovery that such property has been stolen will raise anger in the victim, but it appears that overt action is seldom taken, even when the culprit is known.

There is a general feeling in the community that it is somehow wrong to bring in outside legal authorities to take action against a culprit if the situation can be handled locally. The villagers do not like or trust the R.C.M. Police and do not want them in the village any more than is absolutely necessary. Nevertheless, villagers are not unwilling to threaten legal action, and this frequently results in restitution. For example, it is common practice for a person to repair damaged property that results from drunkenness. Sometimes this is done freely and is accompanied by an apology or by a joke about the culprit's condition at the time the damage was done. More frequently, however, the offended party has to threaten to call in the police before restitution is made. During the late summer of 1961, two men, both drunk, began to fight. One man ran to his house and closed the door. With some difficulty the second man succeeded in breaking down the door. The next day the owner of the house assessed the damage at \$10. This amount was paid by the culprit under threat of having charges filed against him.

It is clear that crime and law do not play an important part in the lives of Snowdrift people in any formal sense. Crimes against the Canadian legal system are rare, and other matters can usually be dealt with by the villagers. Thefts and other minor misdemeanors are generally ignored, because not to do so would stir up needless trouble that would upset the balance of human relationships, so essential for the smooth operation of a small community, even a relatively individualistic one like Snowdrift. Everyone realizes that cases of assault and property damage usually happen as a result of too much consumption of alcohol. Such cases are therefore regarded as serious only by those directly involved. It has been noted that in most cases, threat of legal action provides sufficient impetus for the settling of disputes.

EXTRA-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

The Chipewyan Indians in the Great Slave Lake area have been exposed to Euro-Canadian culture since the middle of the eighteenth century when the first trading posts were established at the west end of the lake and on the upper Mackenzie River. Over this relatively long period of time, the Indians have become familiar with the technical aspects of European and Canadian cultures, but their world view has not widened greatly. As far as the people of Snowdrift are concerned, their most intensive extra-community relations are with the villages in the immediate region. Their knowledge of and interest in the greater Canadian culture of which they are a part are minimal in the extreme.

Perhaps one of the most obvious indications of the impact of the outside world on the people of Snowdrift is their possession of a moderately well-developed concept of time. Nearly every home has an alarm clock and more than half the villagers own wrist watches, although some who own them, as

well as many others, cannot tell the time. There are a number of activities going on in the village that reinforce the awareness of time. The store is open for a specific number of hours each day, and it is closed for an hour at noon. School begins and ends at specific times, and the freezer is open once a week at a definite hour in the late afternoon. There are times, however, when this developing appreciation for the concept of time is more apparent than real. The carpenter employing Indians on the construction of the federal school during the summer of 1960 found it difficult to get the men to report for work at a specific time. The author also experienced this difficulty with regard to the scheduling of interviews. Time figures very little in people's conversation, but there is a calendar in every house, and most people are always aware of the date, partly because they are anxious to observe Sundays.

The Snowdrift people are more mobile than their isolated location might suggest. Nearly everyone in the community has visited the other settlements on Great Slave Lake, and a number have first hand information about the north shore of Lake Athabasca. Because of recent shifts in the settlement pattern, Snowdrift people have relatives and friends in such places as Fort Smith, Fort Resolution, Fort Chipewyan, Fond-du-Lac, Fort Fitzgerald, and Rocher River. Although frequent contact is not maintained with these communities, they are well known.

The only other Indian group of which the villagers have detailed knowledge or with whom they have any large scale personal contact is the Dogribs who live at Fort Rae at the northern tip of the northwest arm of Great Slave Lake. In the past, large numbers of these Indians have stopped by the village on their way east to hunt caribou, or have met villagers at Fort Reliance or other places where both groups were hunting. In addition, there are twelve Snowdrift residents who are at least half-Dogrib, three of whom are family heads. These families are well integrated into the village social structure, and there is nothing to distinguish them from other village residents. They all speak Chipewyan, and the election of one of them as councillor after band reorganization attests to his standing in the village. Aside from Dogrib contacts, knowledge of all other Indians is minimal. A few Snowdrift residents who have spent time in the government hospital at Edmonton have met other Indians from western Canada. Those who have worked at Hay River or Yellowknife have come in contact with Slaveys, but the other Indian groups of the Mackenzie River are completely unknown. It is significant that, in conversation, Snowdrift people normally refer to other Indian tribes by name, and refer only to Chipewyan as Indians; for example, "He is a Dogrib who married an Indian."

Yellowknife is the best known community to the people of Snowdrift, not only because it is the trading centre and the source of most planes that come to the village, but also because nearly everyone leaving the community to go to work, to school, or to the hospital passes through there. When Snowdrift people are in Yellowknife, they usually are able to stay with relatives, but even when this is not possible, there are always many people whom they know.

Most Snowdrift men have an ambivalent attitude about Yellowknife and its attractions. The young men, in particular, see it as a more exciting, interesting place than Snowdrift, because there are plenty of girls as well as the opportunity to earn money. During the summer, when there is little to do in

Snowdrift, the men spend much time sitting in groups of three or four on the steps of the Hudson's Bay Company or around a boat that is being repaired, and sooner or later the desultory conversation gets around to the subject of Yellowknife. In the early summer of 1961, a few families went to Yellowknife in the hope of securing employment, but they did not do well. The Agency Superintendent reported that he was able to obtain jobs for some of them, but they usually did not stay employed long. Since they had no nets and could not fish, most of them had a difficult summer until they returned to the village around the first of August. The men still in the village had heard vague rumours about the situation at Yellowknife but knew none of the details. All they did know was that some men who had started on jobs had, for one reason or another, been laid off. Yellowknife seems to have a certain fascination for the men, but their conversation indicates that they are afraid to go there. They are afraid of the fact that there is too much to drink, and they do not like the idea of living in a place where everything must be purchased at a store and where a person is totally dependent upon obtaining and keeping a job. Reports brought back by men who have stayed there briefly are not reassuring. One informant, a single man, who accompanied a family to Yellowknife and expected to stay the entire summer, said that when he obtained employment he had in mind that he would be able to earn enough to purchase an outboard motor. However, he soon found that he was spending all his money in the bars. After working about two weeks, drinking every night and failing to arrive at work on time in the mornings, he was fired. He spoke of the whole chain of events as though it had been inevitable. Others, too, expressed their distrust of life in the larger community, stating that there were simply too many opportunities to get into trouble. And yet, the villagers are frequently dissatisfied with life in Snowdrift, particularly during the summer when there is little to do and when the employment outlook is bleak. At this time there is much talk of going to Yellowknife, and a few people, if they have the money for gas, make short visits during the course of the summer. They become homesick or discouraged and soon return. None of them seem to take very seriously to the suggestion that they move there permanently. They say 'Snowdrift people' belong in the village. However, there is no doubt that many men would be willing and eager to take advantage of seasonal employment opportunities in the larger community if they were available.

There is little knowledge in the village of the world outside the Great Slave Lake - Lake Athabasca area. No one subscribes to newspapers or magazines, and few could read well enough to profit from them even if they were available. Few people have any idea what Euro-Canadians in the urban centres to the south do to make a living; some even think that they hunt, fish, and trap much in the same way as Snowdrift people do. Those who have spent time in the hospitals in Edmonton or Calgary know something of life in a large city, but they do not seem to be able to convey an accurate picture to their friends and relatives in the village.

CEREMONIES AND ENTERTAINMENT

The ceremonial life of the people of Snowdrift is limited, and it is restricted almost entirely to activities which take place at the time of the treaty pay-

ments, usually in the late spring or in summer and at Christmas. In many Athapaskan villages, Treaty Day is a very important one and is frequently accompanied by an elaborate 'tea dance,' which consists of a traditional dance, accompanied usually by a feast of roast moose meat and tea. A tea dance is supposed to take place out-of-doors, and the dancing is done around a big fire where the moose meat is cooking. At Snowdrift, however, everything is on a much simpler scale, and although there is usually a dance and a feast, there seems to be only a moderate amount of enthusiasm for both. In 1960, treaty payments were made early in July. The treaty party, consisting of the Agency Superintendent and his assistant, an R.C.M. Police constable, and an X-ray party, arrived by plane from Yellowknife, and payments were made the following day. That evening a form of tea dance was held in a large, abandoned tourist cabin in the village. People began to gather in the cabin shortly after midnight when the drums were brought in. The drums are circular hardwood frames covered with caribou skin and with strips of sinew running across the back. The instruments, which are held by the sinew, are struck with a stick on the skin side. They must be heated frequently to loosen the skin covering in order to achieve deeper, louder tones. Only about fifty people gathered in the cabin, and three men drummed and sang while the others danced. The drums are hit hard with a simple two shorts followed by a pause. The singing is simply a wordless chant to a single melody. Each dance lasts about fifteen or twenty minutes and consists of the dancers shuffling their feet in a clockwise circle. Many of those present were young people who appeared to have little real interest in the dance, but there were also some very old people who danced with considerable enthusiasm and pleasure. This particular tea dance lasted until about 3:00 A.M., after which there was square dancing to a violin and guitar for another hour and a half. It was obvious that the people much prefer square dancing to the tea dance, and it is not difficult to understand why. The former is much livelier and presents something of a challenge in terms of intricacies, whereas the latter, being just simple movement in a circle, probably becomes rather monotonous even to those who enjoy it the most. At any rate, it is certain that tea dances are not held very frequently in Snowdrift, the one described above being the only one held during the two summers that the author was in the village.

Frequently a feast is also held in connection with Treaty Day; such a feast took place in 1960 on the evening following the departure of the treaty party. The sub-chief went around to every house to collect money to buy food for the feast, which was held in his house, one of the largest in the village. Most people gave only twenty-five or fifty cents. Some gave as much as a dollar or a dollar and a half. The Hudson's Bay Company manager contributed some rice and dried fruit as well as one hundred pounds of buffalo meat from the freezer. One man contributed a large portion of a recently killed caribou. A rifle was fired about 11:00 P.M. to signify that the feast was ready, and gradually everyone began to gather at the sub-chief's house bringing eating utensils with them. The various families seated themselves around the walls of the ground floor of the house, with the men along one wall and the women along the others. Strips of oilcloth were spread before the seated people, and young men, acting as waiters, began to distribute the food which had been prepared by a group of women earlier in the day. It took nearly an hour and

a half to serve the food, and nothing was eaten during this period. Upstairs, all the children were gathered; their plates, which had been brought by their parents, were filled and handed up to them. Very small children remained downstairs with their parents. When all the food had been served, the sub-chief spoke at great length about the Bible, particularly the miracle of the loaves and fishes. He also said that people should be industrious and always do what the chief says. Then they all said a prayer and began to eat. The meal consisted of boiled buffalo and caribou meat, rice, macaroni dinner, raisins, stewed fruit, cereal, mashed potatoes, tea, bannock, and jelly. In most cases, each person received more than he could eat, and the extra food was wrapped up to take home. After the dishes were cleared away and the cooking utensils washed by the young girls, a square dance was held which lasted until about 4:00 A.M.

Feasts are occasionally held at other times during the year, although it is probably very seldom that there are more than two or three a year. In the past they have frequently been held on New Year's Day, and in August 1961, a feast took place soon after the men returned from fire fighting. It seems likely that feasts would occur more frequently if the villagers could persuade the Hudson's Bay Company manager to contribute food.

Christmas activities in the village are minimal, and they are always organized by Euro-Canadians, not Indians. Both a High Mass and a Low Mass are said on Christmas Eve, beginning at midnight; a Low Mass also takes place on Christmas morning. For Christmas of 1961, the school and the mission together organized a distribution of old clothes that took place on Christmas Eve, but it was poorly organized and poorly attended. There was also some candy sent in by the Agency Superintendent, which was distributed to the children. In spite of the general absence of organized Christmas activities, the village is an exciting place just before the holiday, for all the trappers return to trade their furs before the store closes for Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve the store usually stays open until just before the church service begins, and there is much buying, particularly of clothes, toys, and other durable goods. Christmas is eagerly looked forward to by everyone. Much home brew is made, and, those who become drunk after the midnight service usually sleep most of Christmas Day. Friends and relatives exchange presents, and children receive money to buy candy, pop, and toys. There is possibly more money in the village at this time than at any other time of the year. The trappers have sold their furs and generally have some cash in excess of their debt. There are many card games, and the money changes hands rapidly. Some people like to decorate their homes for Christmas, putting up Christmas trees or simply decorating their houses with coloured crepe paper and balloons. Those with radios like to listen to Christmas music. It can be said, however, that the midnight church service and a lively drunken party afterwards are the main characteristics of a Snowdrift Christmas.

Although ceremonial life in Snowdrift may be limited, other forms of entertainment do exist. The importance of visiting and of summer picnics has already been stressed, and something has been said about the summer baseball games which are popular among young men. Snowdrift people are very musical, and nearly every family in the village has at least one member who plays a musical instrument, usually a guitar or violin. Young men in particular

may sit in the house for hours playing their guitars and singing western songs. On many nights, groups of young men gather at one house to play the guitar and sing. A number of girls also play, and they may join these groups occasionally. Older men are more apt to be the ones who play violins, and they, too, may spend a musical evening once in a while. Western songs are particularly popular in the village along with sentimental love ballads. Four families own phonographs, and the store sells 'hill-billy' records. A young guitar player may listen to a record many times until he has learned to play a particular tune on his instrument. The Yellowknife radio station plays songs of this kind as do the stations of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan that can be received in the village.

Square dancing is a very popular form of recreation in the community, and evening dances are frequently organized in the school. Many of the Indians are expert square dancers, and there are several very good callers. Usually forty to fifty people of all ages gather for the dances, which seldom begin before midnight and frequently last until four or five in the morning. Music is usually provided by three or four men playing guitars and violins. During the summer of 1960, commercial fishing boats would tie up in the village over the weekends, and their crews would join in a dance held on Saturday night. Most of the fishermen are good dancers, and a number of them play musical instruments. It seems likely that the Indians first learned the many complicated dance steps from the fishermen.

Undoubtedly the most popular form of entertainment in the community is card playing, and the Snowdrift people are inveterate gamblers. The favourite games are blackjack and gin rummy, and nearly every evening there will be at least one card game going on in the village. This is a mixed social activity; men and women play together. People will drop in; sometimes they join the game for a while, depending on how much money they have and on how long their luck holds. The players invariably sit on the floor, and they deal the cards onto a sheet or blanket spread in front of them. There are always a number of people watching the game, some of whom may eventually play. On a hot summer evening it is common for the game to take place out-of-doors. In past years when commercial fishing boats frequented the area in large numbers, they would frequently put into the village, and the crew members would join an all-night card game. Informants stated that Snowdrift people were almost invariably successful in these games.

As card playing depends on the amount of money in the village, it was noted that whenever family allowance cheques, treaty payments, or fire fighting cheques were received, there was hardly an adult to be seen around the village. The stakes vary considerably. In an ordinary blackjack game, the stakes are twenty-five or fifty cents a hand, and even a consistent winner has little chance of making more than five or ten dollars. However, if money is plentiful the stakes may be much higher. After fire fighting cheques were received in August 1961, the author witnessed one blackjack game in which the stakes were one dollar a hand. A single player won more than fifty dollars in about three hours. The highest stakes witnessed by the author during the period of field-work were three dollars a hand at gin rummy. However, informants talked about almost legendary games played several years ago after fifteen men returned from road work in the vicinity of Fort Providence. One informant

said that he had won \$850 in two nights, with which he purchased a canoe and an outboard motor. When adults have money for gambling, children often beg nickels and dimes from their parents and engage in pitching coins against the wall of the store or a house.

Gambling is enjoyed by nearly everyone in the village, but there are a few individuals who never play cards. These people do not feel that it is morally wrong to gamble, but usually they have experienced heavy losses in the past and are determined not to get into such a position again. One informant said that his passion for gambling was once so great that after losing all his money he lost his rifle, his outboard motor, and even his canoe. He was appalled at the extent of his losses and since that time has not trusted himself to play again. Others lost money that was badly needed for necessities, and they decided not to play anymore. It is generally true that these non-players are older family heads who have come to place family responsibilities ahead of the pleasures of gambling. However, the number of people in the village who do not play cards at all is very small.

In addition to card playing, the Snowdrift Indians play a variant of a hand game which has been reported throughout most of northern North America, the Plains, and as far south as Arizona and California (Birket-Smith, 1929, II, p. 370-71). The game, as played by the Chipewyan, has been described by a number of early explorers, travellers, and anthropologists (Hearne, 1958, p. 215; Curtis, 1928, vol. 18, p. 37-38; Mason, 1946, p. 34; Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 70; Munsterhjelm, 1953, p. 161). It seems likely, at least from Hearne's description, that the game was played prior to European contact, and, if this is the case, it is certainly one of the last aboriginal material traits visible in the culture of the Snowdrift Chipewyan.

The hand game, which apparently is subject to many variations, will be described as it was played at Snowdrift during the summer of 1960. Actually, the game was played only once during the author's stay in the village. By way of explanation informants stated that the drums, which are a necessary part of the game, were in poor condition and that, generally, they preferred cards anyway. At this particular playing of the game, eight to sixteen men sat on the floor in two rows opposite each other. Each participant held a penny, a match, a cartridge, or some other object in his hands. As the singing and drumming began, the men on one side hid their hands beneath a blanket, coat, or cap, and then brought their clenched fists forward from beneath the covering, crossing their arms in front of them. One member of the opposite side then attempted to guess which hand the object was in. If he pointed to the left hand, the players with the object in the left hand dropped out, and he kept guessing until all players had withdrawn. Then it was the other side's turn to guess. A number of wooden stakes were used as counters, one for each man on each side, and when the guessing side was wrong, the playing side received the number of counters equal to the number of players on their side who were still in the game. When one side received all the counters, a game was considered played, and there was a pay-off and a brief rest for the singers, drummers, and participants. Before the start of each game, the various players made side bets with each other. Each player may bet with any member of the opposite side; the items wagered ranged from matches, cartridges, and cigarettes, to varying amounts of money. The playing of the game

was accompanied by rhythmic chanting, frenzied drumming, and the various bodily contortions of the players. The players, in particular, work themselves into a highly emotional state, largely for the purpose of disconcerting the opposition. Apparently the game can be played with as many as twelve men on each side, in which case the man who is calling chooses only from one to four members of the opposing team each time he guesses.

The game witnessed by the author began about 6:00 in the evening at the home of one of the villagers. There were numerous breaks, but it continued until 5:00 the following morning. Many people gathered for the game; various individuals participated for a while and then dropped out to watch. Women do not seem to play. In past years when large numbers of Dogrib Indians came east to hunt caribou in Stark Lake or near Fort Reliance, they would stop at the village; this was always the time of a great celebration. Informants said that there would be large numbers of Dogrib canoes drawn up on the beach, and the hand game would be played nearly every night. Frequently there would also be tea dances. It is unlikely that much money is exchanged during the hand game; it seems to be played more for the excitement of the drumming and singing than for any other reason. This may be why it does not compete with blackjack and gin rummy for the position of favourite village game.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Individual and the Culture

FORMAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Snowdrift school is one of the many federal day schools in the Northwest Territories operated by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources. The school buildings, which include a teacher's residence, powerhouse, and one-room school, were constructed during the summers of 1959 and 1960 and were ready for use by the fall of 1960. Eight grades are taught, and, by law, all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend. In the fall of 1961 there was an enrolment of thirty-eight children. School hours are from 9:00 until noon and from 1:00 until 4:00 in the afternoon with younger children sometimes being dismissed earlier. Depending upon the wishes of the teacher, the school building is available for a variety of village functions such as occasional films, dances, and band meetings.

Prior to the construction of the school, Snowdrift children attended federal schools at Fort Smith and Fort Providence. Planes would pick up the children about the first of September and bring them back to the village toward the end of June for the summer months. Although village opinion was officially against sending the children away to school, as was frequently stated at band meetings in the presence of the Agency Superintendent, it was by no means unanimously held. It is true that many parents regretted having to send their very small children away from home for such long periods of time, but some families with older children have very little enthusiasm for the newly constructed Snowdrift school. With the children at home, a family is less mobile, and the family head will worry more about the welfare of those he leaves behind when he is trapping away from the village. More acculturated parents feel that their children learn to read and write English much faster in the school at Fort Smith. In Snowdrift, Chipewyan is spoken in all homes at all times, and this has a pronounced effect on the learning of English. The children themselves seem undecided whether they prefer school away from the village or at home. It is probably true that most of the younger ones prefer to live at home, although, had the local school not been built, they probably would have looked forward to returning to the larger community. It seems likely that some children might be persuaded to continue their schooling beyond the compulsory age limit if they could be sure of going to school away from the village. One informant, aged seventeen, had been out of school for a year and decided that he would return for the 1960-61 school year. He was looking forward to the winter in Fort Smith, but he changed his mind about school when he learned that it would be taught locally. It seems certain that the children did benefit in many ways from attending the boarding schools. Not only did they profit from a higher level of education, but they were certain

to receive proper food during the winter months. On the other hand, when the children were away from the village for ten months of the year, they had little opportunity to acquire knowledge about the country around Snowdrift in which they will have to make their living when they leave school. It was noted that children as old as fifteen or sixteen had little knowledge of the geography of the surrounding area, and some had never hunted, trapped, or even operated an outboard motor.

Although the new federal school at Snowdrift has a total enrolment of nearly forty students, there are seldom that many in school at any one time. However, the daily attendance usually does not fall much below thirty. Parents have a tendency to take children out of school for hunting or trapping trips, but in general they cooperate with the teacher, frequently asking him which child in the family could miss school for a week or so with the least damage. Families cooperate with one another and with the teacher by arranging to care for each other's children when extended trips away from the village are anticipated.

The curriculum followed in the Snowdrift school is largely a traditional one with emphasis on language, social studies, arithmetic, art, and music. The daily program of the school is built around these subjects with whatever variations and additions the teacher desires. Of necessity, the major instructional emphasis is placed on oral English and on reading; much of the daily program is devoted to instruction of a remedial nature. In the past, many students have advanced to the upper grades without an adequate knowledge of English, and this handicaps all their work.

It is certainly true that the amount of progress made by children in the lower grades in learning to read and write English is going to be influenced by the fact that practically no English is spoken in any Snowdrift home. This is, of course, in contrast to the situation in the boarding schools at Fort Smith and Fort Providence where the children interact with English speakers most of the time, both in and out of the classroom. Local elementary education is likely to provide a relatively poor background in reading and writing; when the children reach the sixth and seventh grades where they should be reading to learn rather than learning to read, much time will still need to be allocated to work on fundamentals. During the 1960-61 school year there were thirteen children in the first grade, and because of the necessity of special work with these new students, it was decided that for the following academic year all those children in the fifth grade and over would return to the federal boarding school at Fort Smith.

Generally speaking, adults in the village are non-committal about sending their children to school. They know that it is a good thing for the children to be able to read, write, and speak English, and there is, for the most part, little complaining about the acknowledged fact that the child's usefulness in the family is impaired by school attendance. Most older adults have very little conception of what school actually is, and they tend to more or less accept it as something thrust upon them by the outside world. Some families feel that their children should be working and helping with chores. Older men, particularly, feel that they need their sons to help with trapping. They feel that it is all right for girls to go to school as there is nothing much for them to do in the village, and they would therefore probably be better off in

school. Boys, on the other hand, must grow up to be trappers, and trapping is something that they cannot learn in school.

In 1958 the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources opened a residential high school and technical school in Yellowknife. This institution has attracted considerable interest all over Canada because it is the only federal high school in the Northwest Territories and one of the few boarding schools where Eskimos and Indians live and attend classes together. As yet, few Snowdrift residents have attended the Sir John Franklin school. None have had the academic requirements to enter the high school, but three boys from the village are attending the trade school operated in conjunction with the high school. This type of education appeals particularly to boys over sixteen, and several additional Snowdrift youths who would like to enrol in the course have been prevented from doing so by the unwillingness of their parents to spare them from the normal family duties. It seems likely that as more Snowdrift children complete the eighth grade, either in the village or at the Fort Smith school, there will be an increasing tendency for them to continue their education in Yellowknife. This will be true particularly if the upper grades continue to be taught in Fort Smith rather than in the village. At the Fort Smith school the older children are away from village influences and are subjected instead to pressures to continue their education. It is safe to assume that good students at Fort Smith will be strongly urged to continue on to high school, and it will be made easy for them to do so by the school authorities. Since the children themselves will be spending only the summer months at home and will have become accustomed to life in more urban surroundings, they should be able to withstand whatever pressures are brought to bear by their families to keep them in the village after they complete the compulsory years of education. It is doubtful whether those who do attend the high school or the trade school in Yellowknife will return to the village after they have completed their training, as it is unlikely that there will be opportunities for them to make a living at the trades they have learned.

HEALTH, SICKNESS, AND CURES

The Chipewyan Indians have consistently suffered from the effects of European-introduced diseases since their initial contacts in the early eighteenth century. A small-pox epidemic in 1781 is said to have killed nearly 90 per cent of the Chipewyan; it worked similar havoc among other peoples in the Lake Athabasca area (Hearne, 1958, p. 115), particularly among the Cree. The remaining Chipewyan in the area were content to confine their operations largely to the neighbourhood of the post at Fort Chipewyan when it was constructed in 1788 (Godsell, 1938, p. 251; Petitot, 1885, p. 50). Diseases and consequent starvation continued to reduce the Indian population of the Great Slave Lake – Lake Athabasca region throughout the historic period; as late as 1928, an attack of influenza, followed by pneumonia, killed forty-six people out of a total population of 901 in the parish of Fort Resolution, which at that time included Yellowknife and a number of other outlying settlements to the east and west. It is reported that 20 per cent of the population of Great Slave Lake communities died during this epidemic, and the loss would

probably have been much greater had it not been for the efforts of the Catholic priests and sisters in the hospital at Fort Resolution (Bell, 1929, p. 12-13).

Relatively little is known about the traditional curing practices of the Chipewyan. Shamanistic practices are described in some detail by Hearne (1958, p. 123-26) and to a lesser extent by Franklin (1824, vol. 1, p. 246), but later observers fail to add anything significant to the observations made by these explorers. Hearne also documents the abandonment of the sick and infirm while an Indian group was travelling (1958, p. 131), and Captain Back tells of old people who made their way to Fort Reliance after having been abandoned to die because of their infirmities (1836, p. 193-94). Shamans have long ceased to be active, at least among the Snowdrift Chipewyan, and contemporary attitudes toward illness and its treatment appear to have developed largely as a result of contact with Euro-Canadian medical practitioners and government organizations.

Today the health needs of the village are the concern of the Indian and Northern Health Services, a branch of the Department of Health and Welfare. A nurse, who is stationed in Yellowknife, makes periodic visits to the community, sometimes accompanied by a doctor from the hospital at Fort Rae. Both are scheduled to visit the village every three months, but they usually come oftener. The doctor will come out any time his services are specifically requested, and the nurse, who is expected to visit the community more frequently, often accompanies the Agency Superintendent, the cost of air transportation being shared by the two government departments. The Department of Health and Welfare attempts, whenever possible, to have a lay dispenser in the various villages under its jurisdiction who will administer emergency medical attention and distribute the medical supplies that are kept in the village. A lay dispenser is appointed after an interview; the only qualifications necessary appear to be a willingness to do the work and an interest in the welfare of the people. Very often it is the wife of the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the manager himself who becomes the lay dispenser. There is a small stipend of about \$10 a month. There was no lay dispenser at Snowdrift in 1961, but the manager acted as the distributor of the medical supplies kept in the store. If medication is to be dispensed from the village supply, the nurse will inform the manager who then gives the required amount to the person for whom the medicine has been prescribed. The nurse is responsible for replenishing the medical supplies in the village. The manager, although he may not be distinguished with the title of lay dispenser, is still the person to whom all villagers must go when they are sick or injured. With the help of first aid and home treatment manuals, he must prescribe medication on the basis of his own untrained observations. He has no judgment but his own to tell him whether a case is serious enough to notify the nurse in Yellowknife by telegram.

The nurse and doctor combine their visits to the community on some occasions, particularly in connection with the visit of the X-ray party to the village. This takes place once a year, usually in the summer at the time when the treaty payments are made; this is a good time for the X-ray party to visit the village because all the people are there. In 1960, most of the villagers took advantage of the opportunity to be X-rayed, although a few did not bother; nearly everyone seems to realize the value of being X-rayed. In 1961,

however, the Treaty Day was in April, and the X-ray party came in early July. As a result, some villagers were away and could not be X-rayed. In both years, the members of the X-ray party seemed to be much more interested in getting in and out of the village than in X-raying the people. In 1961 they came a week in advance of the well-advertised date and neglected to bring the data cards which showed such pertinent information as who had been X-rayed the previous year. In addition to the X-ray for tuberculosis, nearly everyone in the village has had polio shots and immunization against diphtheria and whooping cough. Some have had smallpox vaccinations, and a few have had the TABT (tetanus, paratyphoid A and B, and typhoid) shots. When Snowdrift residents have to go to hospital they are sent either to Fort Rae, to Fort Smith, or to Yellowknife, depending on which hospital has room. If a person has tuberculosis, he is sent out to the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton as soon as possible.

The Snowdrift people seem to have no theories, magical or otherwise, to account for illness; it is something that is simply accepted. Nevertheless, they talk a lot about their illnesses, and they tend to pamper themselves when they are sick. The author found that whenever someone had even the slightest cold, it was a simple matter to elicit detailed information about it, and those with any kind of lingering ailment were always ready to discuss their symptoms. It would probably not be fair to say that the people of Snowdrift are hypochondriacs, but the fact remains that they are very much aware of all kinds of ailments, and they never exert themselves needlessly if they think they are ill. A man who had spent two years in the Charles Camsell Hospital never did any work, even after he had been back home for more than five months. His wife hauled the water, cut the wood, and carried the groceries from the store. In spite of this interest in illness and willingness to discuss symptoms, there is no great rush to see the doctor or nurse when either is in the village. The people are generally shy, and their inability to express themselves in English inhibits their dealings with medical personnel. Thus, if the doctor or nurse simply goes directly to the school or to the Hudson's Bay Company, as is usually the case, and waits for sick people to appear, it is unlikely that he or she will treat very many patients. Instead, visits by medical personnel would be much more effective if every house in the village were visited, the doctor or nurse taking the time to discuss problems of health and illness with the people in their homes. Toward the end of August 1960, a new nurse took over the office at Yellowknife, and his visits to Snowdrift were remarkable for the fact that every effort was made to seek out people who were ill and to talk over their symptoms with them. As a result, the people felt that for the first time they were dealing with a medical representative who was really interested in them, and their dealings with him were more pleasant and more profitable for all concerned. The doctor or nurse with an authoritarian manner is apt to defeat the purpose of visits to the village since lack of response on the part of the Indians may cause the medical representative to develop an overly critical attitude toward them in their hesitation to accept medical treatment and advice.

The methods and attitudes of medical personnel can have a great deal to do with the willingness of Snowdrift people to seek treatment and to follow advice, but there are certain basic attitudes toward modern medicine and its

practitioners that inhibit the work of the Department of Health and Welfare. People are willing to follow some advice, but they are not always very persevering in carrying out the doctor's or nurse's suggestions. The Indians have a great deal of faith in the ability of pills to cure ailments, but they have very little patience with remedies requiring some effort on their part, such as the applying of hot compresses, soaking, bed rest, the changing of bandages. If medicine does not taste good, it will simply be put on a shelf and never taken. If children do not wish to take medicines, they are usually not forced to do so. There are a number of people who need to consult the doctor or nurse, but who always make themselves scarce when medical assistance is available. These people are usually afraid of being hurt or of having to take some medicine that they will not like. Again, it is probably true that authoritarian behaviour on the part of medical personnel in the past is at least partly responsible for attitudes of this kind. It should be emphasized in this connection that home remedies do not play an important part in the unwillingness of Snowdrift people to follow medical advice. Although there are a number of cures known to the people, no one professes to prefer them to medicines obtained from the nurse or doctor. One elderly woman who lived near the author cut herself badly with a rusty knife and covered the cut with a paste made from chewed tobacco. However, at the first opportunity she visited the author's cabin to obtain some medicine and a clean bandage.

During the summer of 1961, a dentist from Fort Smith visited the village, the first such visit ever made to Snowdrift. He set up his equipment in the teacher's residence, but he had no time to do anything but pull teeth. He hoped to be able to return at a later date to do preventive dentistry, particularly on school children. Most people were very glad to see him, but several mentioned that, although they knew their teeth were in bad shape, they were afraid to have them pulled. The nurse will also occasionally pull teeth, particularly if a person is in considerable pain. However, he has neither the time nor the training to perform regular dental services. Regular dental care is badly needed at Snowdrift. The dentist from Fort Smith, after examining a number of villagers, reported that for the most part the condition of their teeth was unbelievably bad; he said that it was "just as if there wasn't a single dentist in the whole world."

It does not seem as though the villagers have any great fear of going to the hospital. Those who have been in the Charles Camsell Hospital at Edmonton or in the hospitals at Fort Rae, Yellowknife, or Fort Smith speak as though they had enjoyed not only their stay but the people they had met from other places. During the summer of 1960 there were five individuals in hospital with tuberculosis, but by the middle of 1961 all had returned to the village. Only one of these was a family head, and he had been away from the village for nearly two years. The Indian Affairs Branch, as previously noted, provides a ration issue for the families of individuals who are hospitalized. This helps to relieve the anxiety of family heads who are separated from their families for extended periods of time. After a tuberculosis patient returns to the village, a further ration issue is provided for a number of months until he feels equal to resuming normal village subsistence activities.

So far, relatively few family heads have been hospitalized, and those young people who have been have looked upon their period of hospitalization as

something of a lark. Most villagers are fully convinced that tuberculosis is a terrible thing which should be treated as soon as possible and that this can only be done by going to the hospital and doing what the doctors say. When informing people that their X-rays indicate a stay in the hospital is necessary, the nurse or doctor always stresses how fortunate it is that the disease was discovered early so that a cure can be effected before others become infected. This approach works with most people and is particularly successful with those individuals who are experiencing no symptoms at the time their illness is diagnosed. Several informants, who spent periods of up to two years in the Charles Camsell Hospital, never tire of talking about the place and the people they met there. These individuals have many photographs of other patients, and they are always glad to get them out while talking about the old days in the hospital.

In concluding this section on health and illness, some brief reference should be made to village sanitation and general health practices which have been of considerable concern to visiting medical personnel, though some progress has been made in recent years, particularly with regard to waste disposal and baby care. For the twenty-six occupied dwellings in the village there are twelve outhouses, usually located some fifty to seventy-five yards behind the houses. While it is possible that several dwelling units use the same outhouse, it is nevertheless true that many people perform their toilet functions in the bushes near the houses. However, according to the nurse, the number of outhouses has grown from only four to the present total in a year's time. This improvement has been largely in response to an appeal on the part of the nurse and the doctor. As far as general health conditions are concerned, the situation at Snowdrift is not bad. The people have enough to eat, and the fact that fish are always available means that the villagers do not suffer so much from seasonal scarcities of meat. From a nutritional point of view the diet is not particularly good, but individuals suffering from malnutrition are practically unknown. Sanitary conditions are fair, but there is much room for improvement. The people are largely ignorant of the relationship between dirt and disease, and present health programs do not stress the educational aspect of hygiene improvement plans. An effective program of health education will probably need to be instituted before health improvement on a large scale takes place.

SMOKING AND DRINKING

In the village, tobacco is used in five forms: cigarettes, cigars, snuff, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco. Most of the people, particularly the young and middle aged, smoke cigarettes. The store disposes of large quantities of ready-made cigarettes as well as papers and cigarette tobacco. People much prefer ready-mades, but they are more expensive and therefore sometimes beyond their reach. A number of middle-aged men use snuff, but no one under the age of forty does so, and to the best of the author's knowledge women do not use it. Cigars are a novelty. The store orders a few boxes each year, and this number is usually more than sufficient. A few old men and women chew tobacco, and in 1961 one middle-aged man and two old men smoked pipes, as did three elderly women. Pipe smoking and tobacco chewing are definitely for old people.

With the exception of no more than five or six individuals, everyone in the community over the age of sixteen smokes. The average cigarette smoker uses at least one pack a day, and many smoke two when they have the money. Youngsters of thirteen or fourteen smoke occasionally, particularly when cigarettes are offered to them, but they usually are not regular smokers, possibly because they do not often have money to buy cigarettes; most youngsters prefer candy bars and soda pop. The author never heard any comments about the presumed evils of smoking for children, nor did he hear regrets expressed by smokers that they had acquired the habit. One man who had stopped smoking spoke of the amount of money he had saved since giving up tobacco.

Drinking has presumably been an important aspect of the Chipewyan culture pattern ever since initial contact with Europeans. Early observers have less to say on this subject than might be expected, but Franklin's comments are sufficient to indicate the nature of the situation:

At the opening of the water in spring, the Indians resort to the establishments to settle their accounts with the traders, and to procure the necessities they require for the summer. This meeting is generally a scene of much riot and confusion as the hunters receive such quantities of spirits as to keep them in a state of intoxication for several days (Franklin, 1824, vol. 1, p. 241-42).

Today the drinking pattern among the Snowdrift Chipewyan is complex. And as it has come to assume such an important place in the total village culture, it must be dealt with in some detail.¹

For the most part, the people of Snowdrift drink a mild alcoholic beverage that is home-brewed from raisins, sugar, yeast, and water. These are the basic ingredients, but there are some variations. Beans, rice, and rolled oats are occasionally added, although no one seems to know just how these items can be said to improve a brew. Although raisin brew is most commonly made, canned tomatoes or dried fruits are sometimes substituted for raisins; fresh raspberries, which grow in abundance around the village, may be substituted in the late summer when they are ripe. The number of yeast packages used will vary according to the availability of this item. One package is sufficient for the ordinary batch of brew; a stronger drink is believed to require two or three packages of yeast. In past years, the Hudson's Bay Company manager, usually at the suggestion of the chief, has attempted to curtail the making of home brew by withdrawing the yeast supply from the store shelves or by rationing it, one package to a customer. This is seldom effective since people coming from Yellowknife bring supplies of yeast, and various individuals are successful in begging it from the manager.

Raisin brew, as manufactured at Snowdrift, is usually made by the following process. A large pail containing approximately three gallons of water and two pounds of raisins is placed over an open fire. The water is brought to a boil, and the raisins are cooked for about one-half hour. Sugar and any additional ingredients are then added, and the mixture is stirred until the sugar is dissolved. Then the water is allowed to cool slightly before the yeast is added. Once it is certain that the yeast is beginning to act, the pail is covered tightly and wrapped securely in blankets or clothes to keep it warm

¹The drinking pattern among other groups of northern Athapaskan Indians is discussed by Helm, 1961, p. 20-21; Helm and Lurie, 1961, p. 102-107; Honigmann, 1946, p. 111; 1949, p. 107-108; and Honigmann and Honigmann, 1945.

while the yeast is working. A batch of brew is usually allowed to stand for about twenty-four hours, after which it is considered suitable for drinking. At this time the yeast is still working, and some brewers prefer to let their concoctions stand for three or four days. However, it was noted that even those who were most determined to allow their brew to age for several days were seldom able to withstand the temptation to drink it at the end of twenty-four hours.

Although by far the greatest amount of alcoholic beverage consumed by the Indians of Snowdrift is manufactured locally, the people invariably express a preference for beer and commercial liquor. These, of course, are not readily obtainable in the village, although some Indians will make arrangements with the pilots of the various planes that come to the community to bring a bottle of rum or whiskey from the liquor store in Yellowknife. Understandably, however, the pilots are usually unwilling to perform this service unless they are paid in advance. Overproof rum is much preferred by the Indians. They are to a large extent unfamiliar with other kinds of liquor. Since 1959, Indians have been able to purchase liquor at liquor stores in the Northwest Territories, and some Snowdrift people have permits which they use when in Yellowknife. Many people are still afraid that they will endanger their position as treaty Indians if they purchase liquor. At times when brew consumption in the village is high but the supply temporarily low, some men will attempt to prolong a spree by drinking anything that contains some alcohol. Under this heading it is necessary to list perfume, vanilla extract, and Listerine as items that are frequently purchased for direct internal consumption.

The Snowdrift Indians drink home brew at almost any time, and, for most individuals, there is no need of a special occasion to get a brew party started. It seems to be the case that there is much heavier drinking during the summer months than in winter, but this is probably because most batches of home brew are made outdoors, and winter weather is simply not conducive to brew making. Also, summer is a time of relative inactivity, and there is much more time for drinking and the elaborate preparations that go with it. In winter the men are busy trapping and hunting, and, as a result, heavy drinking is likely to be confined to special holidays such as Christmas and the New Year when everyone is in the village and in a holiday mood. During the summer months, and at other times of the year as well, certain occasions may give rise to general brew making on the part of the villagers. After treaty payments are made, most people have some money, and they usually prepare many batches of brew. If a dance is going to be held at the school, a number of young men will be sure that they attend in a semi-intoxicated condition. Caribou hunters returning from Fort Reliance in the early fall may consider their homecoming a worthy occasion for celebration. The fact is, however, that no special occasion is needed for a drinking party. One informant, typical of many younger men, makes brew as often as he can afford to, because, as he puts it, "there is no beer parlour in town."

It is probably a valid generalization that nearly all Snowdrift adult males drink home brew, and most of them become intoxicated at least once a month or oftener. Despite frequent and gross inebriety, alcoholism, in the sense of addiction, does not occur. Drinking takes place only within a social context; solitary drinking is completely unknown and is inconceivable to the

Snowdrift Indians. Observed drinking groups varied in size from two to eight, and the vast majority of them consisted of men only. Women do drink occasionally, particularly with their husbands or other male relatives, but a mixed drinking party is very rare. Most women claim to be afraid of the men when they are drinking and usually leave the house with their small children when a serious drinking party is in progress. Kinship does not seem to figure in any consistent manner or to any significant degree in the composition of such parties. Nearly all those men who make brew are relatively young, mostly between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. Few, if any, young men begin drinking before they are twenty. One informant, aged sixteen, claimed that he had never tasted brew although he once had managed to become intoxicated on five bottles of Listerine purchased at the store. Young boys and girls frequently stand around and watch during a drinking party, but they are practically never invited to join. In no case were women observed to make brew themselves, but, as previously mentioned, they will drink with their husbands, and the men may invite them to join a party. The chief once told the author that although the R.C.M. Police had informed him that it was illegal to make home brew, he had nevertheless always made it. However, when he was elected chief he stopped making brew because he was afraid that his enemies would use that against him. Just the same, he is always glad to drink brew when it is made by others, and occasionally he finances the making of a batch.

The behavioural patterns associated with drinking are relatively formalized, so much so that it is possible to speak of a definite drinking ritual. Two or three individuals will decide to make a batch of home brew and will pool their financial resources for the purpose of buying the ingredients for its manufacture. The proceedings are nearly always carried out in secret, for reasons that are not always clear. One good reason for secrecy is that when many people know that a batch is being made they will come around to ask for a drink of the finished product. Also, it is not uncommon for a batch of brew to be stolen before the makers have a chance to drink it. In fact, it is considered a challenge to steal someone's brew. It is a legitimate way of scoring off one's friends and neighbours and is generally taken in the spirit of good fun. The victim simply increases his caution the next time he makes a batch. However, it must be admitted that much of the secrecy that surrounds the making of home brew is for no purpose at all and is simply part of the ritual.

Sometimes home brew is made in the house, but more frequently, at least in summer, it is made in the bush in back of the village, or even at some distance from the community. When the batch is about twenty-four hours old, it may be brought to the house of one of the drinkers, or it may be consumed in the bush where there will be no danger of having to share it with others. The participants in a drinking party have a single cup which is dipped into the brew pail by each drinker in turn. The cup is drained in one gulp and passed on to the next person who does the same. Although most people claim to enjoy the taste of brew, the real purpose of drinking is to get drunk, and since raisin brew is not particularly strong, it is necessary to consume a large quantity rapidly if one wishes to become intoxicated. Therefore, the Indians look with derision on anyone who consumes his

cup of brew slowly in small sips. When the author exhibited this kind of drinking behaviour, he was admonished not to drink like a white man. Occasionally some of the brew will be put in bottles and hidden before the drinking party begins. Then what remains in the pail can be shared with visitors who drop in, and when the pail is empty and the visitors leave, the bottles will be brought out.

It is seldom the case that brew is made without some being bottled in this way. After a certain amount has been drunk, the normal procedure is for the drinkers, usually in a state of semi-intoxication by this time, to 'walk around' the village visiting the other houses and drinking from the bottles as they go. They may or may not offer a drink to others, but walking around is definitely part of the drinking ritual; no one would think of becoming intoxicated and staying at home. The drinkers will usually continue to visit up to the point where they collapse and pass out. An intoxicated person may not be welcomed enthusiastically in other houses, but he is always admitted and looked on with kindly toleration. People are amused by his actions and feel friendly toward him. They will always accept a drink from his bottle if it is offered, and they may join him in his wanderings around the village.

Sometimes it happens that a batch of brew may run out before the drinkers are thoroughly intoxicated, and this always sets off a frenzied search for something more to drink. It is under these circumstances that most of the Listerine, perfume, and vanilla extract are consumed. If a frustrated drinker should happen upon someone who has some brew, he will often be willing to pay a considerable amount for it. Several informants mentioned paying as much as \$2 a pint for brew in order to prolong a drinking party.

Drinking is the time for easy social intercourse. There is usually a low undercurrent of nondescript small talk: conversation about trapping, employment opportunities, a few anecdotes, or simply the recounting of recent events in the community. As a party wears on, the effects of intoxication become apparent. After two or three hours of voluble and warm social intercourse, people tend to become thick-lipped, and the intervals of silence lengthen. As intoxication begins to set in, the conversation, particularly among young men, centres on sex. There is much general talk about sex, but specific sexual experiences are rarely alluded to. As the drinkers begin to get really intoxicated, there is renewed exhilaration, and the conversation becomes boisterous. Men stagger out of the house to urinate in the bushes, and sometimes to vomit, and then return to the festivities.

The general pattern of individual behavioural changes in inebriation is fairly standard. There is an appreciable increase in sociability in the early stages. The Indians, who are normally taciturn and reserved, become more voluble. Their normal attitude of relative indifference to the world around them is replaced by a self-confidence which is manifested in positive and sometimes even dogmatic expressions of opinion. The amount of English spoken increases with the level of intoxication. Even if no Euro-Canadians are present, the men may speak English among themselves when they are drunk. As the individual imbibes more brew, he becomes more voluble, but now his attitude is demanding and frequently truculent. At this point the drinkers may begin their wanderings around the village. The period of 'feeling good' has now passed, and the drinkers are thoroughly intoxicated. Fights

frequently occur, and some of the young men may be on the prowl looking for women. As previously mentioned, fights are usually the result of past sexual activities, and it is probably safe to say that whenever two men fight while intoxicated, a woman is back of it somewhere. One informant told the author that the reason a certain individual always attempts to pick a fight with him whenever they both are drinking is that he, the informant, used to visit the man's wife when the man was away hunting. Since this sort of thing is common, there are numerous men in the village who hold grudges against other men.

The fights that occur are seldom very serious. Usually both combatants are so intoxicated that they do little more than take wild swings at one another. It is rare for one person who is intoxicated to pick a quarrel with another who has not been drinking, but occasionally such fights do occur. People seldom attempt to break up a drunken fight; they usually prefer to stand around and await the outcome. As previously mentioned, women are afraid of the men when they are drinking, but other men generally consider a drunken fight to have a certain entertainment value. A few fights do become serious, and the Hudson's Bay Company manager or the school teacher will threaten to call in the R.C.M. Police if someone receives a particularly bad beating. During the winter of 1960, one young man was beaten so badly that the manager thought some instrument had been used. The police investigated, but no arrests were made.

There does not seem to be any faction in the village, or indeed any individuals, who disapprove strongly of drinking. The general feeling is that it is fine to drink, but it is better not to become intoxicated. The ideal drinker, according to village opinion, is the person who drinks just enough to 'feel good' and to have a good time. Everybody deplores fighting, and some of the older people occasionally mention the fact that young men drink too much and are always mean and difficult to get along with when they are drinking. It is also frequently the case that those who drink the most and are notorious for their ability to get into fights while intoxicated are the first to deplore those who drink to excess and fight. They may also say that, though they never start trouble themselves, they are always ready for it when it comes.

The data on Snowdrift drinking supplement those from other primitive societies, which indicate that alcoholism is not a function of the alcohol concentration of the beverages used nor of the quantities imbibed. The Indians drink large quantities of a beverage that is low in alcoholic content. They can sometimes stay drunk for long periods at a time, and occasionally they begin to show signs of intoxication when a relatively small amount of brew has been consumed. It thus appears that intoxication may be a psychological state as well as one directly related to the consumption of the brew. Such pseudo-intoxication suggests that a definite set of expectations is involved in the Indian's definition of a drinking situation (James, 1961, p. 741).

As previously mentioned, no instance of addiction was encountered, and drinking parties, although they occur frequently, are nevertheless fairly widely spaced. It cannot be said that drinking interferes with any of the subsistence activities practised by the Indians at Snowdrift. There is very little drinking during the trapping season, and parties are more likely to

take place following a successful hunt than before or during the activity. There is, however, some indication that chronic drinking in Yellowknife is directly connected to the poor employment record of Snowdrift people who go there. It would seem also that alcohol acts to permit the airing of anxieties of various kinds, and if this is indeed the case, it would illustrate the connection noted by Horton between excessive drinking and culturally induced anxieties (1943, p. 161).

GOSSIP, JUDGMENTS, AND ATTITUDES

Contrary to the situation in many small communities, gossip does not seem to be a potent force in Snowdrift. Although people tend to be distrustful toward their neighbours and relatives, it is rare to hear derogatory comments about others as a part of ordinary conversation. Those few people who repeat malicious information about one another will invariably behave as friends when they meet in the store or in each other's homes. Because the village is small and because face-to-face contacts between all residents are frequent, Snowdrift people fully recognize the necessity of getting along together and preserving the social equilibrium.

Village opinion condemns gossip, but, of course, a certain amount does occur, and the favourite subjects for such gossip are gambling, drinking, and begging. However, comments on these subjects are mostly confined to the very small number of individuals who do not do any of these things. Other forms of gossip concern the availability of certain women and the acuity of certain trades or sales. It should be emphasized, however, that the whole idea of being critical of someone's behaviour or of gossiping runs counter to one of the cherished attitudes of the Snowdrift Indians, namely their general condemnation of people who tell them what to do. Above all, the Indians do not like a person who is bossy, and they do not like people who tell them how to live their lives or who are publicly critical about the lives that certain people are leading.

Aside from these negative factors, it is difficult to determine what the ideal attitudes of Indian character are from the standpoint of the villagers. Informants questioned on the subject invariably referred to one or two specific individuals whom they considered to be leading worthwhile lives. These individuals, who are frequently referred to as the only 'good guys' in the community, are presumably given credit for the fact that they are hard workers, that they always do the best they can for their families, that they do not drink a great deal, nor do they gamble. It is certainly true that there are not many individuals like this in the village, particularly with regard to the latter two requirements. These qualities, according to informants, should be combined with a toleration for the weaknesses of others and a willingness to live and let live at all times.

The general Snowdrift reaction to white people is one of curiosity and a guarded and reserved type of friendliness. This attitude toward Euro-Canadians is coloured by the fact that most contact involves superior-subordinate relationships in which the Indian must please the Euro-Canadian in order to obtain a job, material for the construction of a house, rations, transportation, and so on. Thus the Indian can seldom approach a Euro-

Canadian without exhibiting some of the anxieties inherent in a situation of this kind. The fact was emphasized by relations between the author and his informants who, to some extent, became more relaxed and friendly when they realized that they had nothing material to gain or lose by associating with him. On numerous occasions informants told the author that he was well liked in the village, and it was easy to see that this attitude was not due to any specific personality traits, but rather to the fact that the author had no largess to distribute and was not in any position of authority. On the other hand, as previously indicated, the Indians are well aware of the stereotypic image which most Euro-Canadians with whom they come in contact have of them. Reaction against this stereotype frequently comes to the surface when the Indian is under the influence of alcohol. One illustration will perhaps be sufficient to document this point. On Christmas morning, 1961, an Indian woman, greatly intoxicated, came to visit the author in his cabin. She particularly wanted him to know that although she was not a white person, she really was just like one. She kept herself, her clothes, and her house clean and took good care of her husband. She commented on the fact that her husband would not eat fish three times a day like the rest of the Snowdrift people. Three different meals must be prepared for him each day. "He is a Cree and that is almost like a white man." She also emphasized that she does not chase around after men as other Snowdrift women do. Her entire conversation was meant to indicate that she was different from other Snowdrift people and more like a white woman. The significant point here is that this intoxicated woman was insisting that culturally she was equal to Euro-Canadians. By doing this, she was, as James has pointed out for the Wisconsin Ojibwa, acknowledging the validity of the Euro-Canadian stereotypic image of Indian behaviour (James, 1961, p. 736-37). This submerged desire to conform to the expectations of Euro-Canadian culture seems to be characteristic of many Snowdrift people and forms one feature of a "complex self-image in which conflict and ambivalence are especially evident" (*Ibid.*, p. 737).

CHAPTER EIGHT

Religious Institutions and Concepts

Information concerning the aboriginal religious life of the Chipewyan Indians is very limited and is confined almost entirely to random comments in the writings of early explorers. It would appear that the religious beliefs of these people were never elaborately developed and had largely disappeared before the advent of serious ethnographic work in the area. It was certainly true that attempts to obtain information about this aspect of aboriginal culture from the Indians of Snowdrift were almost totally unsuccessful.

As nearly as can be determined, aboriginal Chipewyan religious beliefs were understood mainly in terms of shamanistic practices as well as in numerous hunting or fishing charms and taboos. The people recognized no deities, but they believed that both men and animals had souls. Simply by thought alone, the soul could bring happiness or misfortune to another person. At death the soul was thought to leave the body and to appear as a ghost with the power to harm and to help the living (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 79). The boundary between man and animals appears to have been very indefinite. In the legends collected by Birket-Smith (1930), Goddard (1912), and Lowie (1912), animals often appear as men, and most of the stories are about animals and how they came to acquire their various qualities. In fact, probably the most common theme in these stories concerns man's friendly, kin-like relationship to animals, which, by tradition, he is forced to kill. There is anxiety over this forced hostility, and a special attempt is made not to offend the souls of game (Cohen and VanStone, 1963). Among all the animal souls, those of the black bear and the beaver are the most important (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 80).

The use of charms to ensure success in subsistence activities was apparently of particular importance. Charms made from bird's bills and feet were frequently tied on fish nets to bring success to the net. The first fish of any species that was caught in a new net was broiled whole on a fire, after which the flesh was removed and the bones were laid on the fire and burned. This was also to ensure the success of the new net. Charms were frequently concealed under the bait when fishing was done with hooks (Hearne, 1958, p. 211-212). Every man carried a small leather bag containing his own personal charms. In this bag were things which were considered sacred to the owner, such as bits of beaver tail and fat, otter's teeth, muskrat intestines and tails, squirrel testicles, and so on. Frequently it was these items that were tied to nets or used as bait on hooks. This sacred bag of charms could not be touched by a woman as it would lose its power (Hearne, 1958, p. 112; Jenness, 1956, p. 17-18).

Another manner in which the aboriginal Chipewyan sought to avoid the dangers of life was by observing a number of taboos. These had to do with

hunting, war, and the various phases of life (Birket-Smith, 1930, p. 82). Many of these were apparently concerned with appeasing the souls of the dead, and a good account of the functioning of these taboos after the massacre of the Eskimos by the Chipewyan at Bloody Falls on the Coppermine River is given by Hearne (1958, p. 133). Although detailed information is lacking, the importance of taboos and superstitions is amply attested to in the literature and appears to have exerted considerable influence on the lives of the Indians. George Simpson reports as follows:

It is an unfortunate characteristic of the Chipewyans that if unsuccessful for any length of time in the early part of the season, their superstitions gain such an ascendancy over them, and they become so fully impressed with the idea that some evil genius haunts them, that they give themselves up entirely to despair; they become careless, neglect their hunting, lay dormant in their encampments for weeks together, while a morsel of leather or babiche remains to keep them in existence, at length to escape the miseries of famine, they murder their families and perish without a single exertion (1938, p. 197).

Certain magical beliefs of a religious or quasi-religious nature have survived into recent times, and these can be said to be an important and significant feature of the belief system of the Snowdrift Chipewyan. Although such beliefs are largely apart from the external religious system which the people have adopted, they are nonetheless firmly held. One older informant told the author that when travelling during the winter he never failed to throw a handful of tea on the snow at the beginning of each day's journey. This was done to keep the wind from blowing and also to keep the informant from becoming lost. It was frequently noted that before making a long boat trip, when calm weather is greatly desired, a knife or other piece of metal is thrown into the lake. This is spoken of as being an offering to the water to remain calm.

There is also much discussion among the Snowdrift Indians concerning so-called 'bush men' who are believed to roam the bush during the summer months, frequently coming close to the village. They are sometimes used as a device to frighten children in order to keep them from wandering. However, adults believe in them too, and several people told the author of encounters with 'bush men.' Usually they are visible from a distance but disappear before the Indian can get a good look at them. One informant reported that he had seen the trail of a 'bush man' on the hill in back of the village, and after this, parents were extremely reluctant to allow their children to go up there. The 'bush men' wear ordinary hard-soled shoes rather than moccasins, and they are always looking for children to steal.

It is clear that 'bush men' are not endowed with real supernatural powers, yet their shadowy existence in the bush and their ability to live apart from other people make them different from ordinary human beings. Belief in these quasi-supernatural beings, which appears to be widespread among northern Athapaskans (Ross, 1867, p. 309; Hurlbert, 1962, p. 55; Osgood, 1931, p. 85; 1936, p. 154), has been described in some detail for the Slave Indians by MacNeish (1954, p. 185-88; 1961, p. 118) and for the Kutchin by Slobodin (1960).

The author is convinced that there are many beliefs surrounding the setting of traps and various other activities associated with both trapping and

hunting. These beliefs, young trappers and hunters carefully learn from their fathers and older male relatives, and they cling avidly to such beliefs. A number of the beliefs associated with caribou hunting are listed by Robinson (1944, p. 41). Trappers, in particular, appear to be very conservative, and they insist on doing things just the way they have been taught; that is, the way things were done in the past. However, it is difficult to obtain details about such beliefs because the Indians are reluctant to talk about them for fear of being laughed at. They mention that these beliefs were held by Indians long ago, and because they are certain that a Euro-Canadian will scoff at such things, they sometimes try to pass the matter off with a laugh. Others will say that these beliefs apply to Indians but not to Euro-Canadians. This is one of the few circumstances when the Snowdrift people are willing to acknowledge that there is one way of life for the white man and another for the Indian. One example should be sufficient to illustrate this point. There is a long, black caterpillar, occasionally seen around the village in summer, that appears to fill the people with considerable dread. Whenever one is seen, much effort is expended to kill it, but all people are very reluctant to step on it. When two such caterpillars were discovered outside the house of an informant, he soaked them with kerosene and set fire to them. When questioned on the matter, he said that these caterpillars were very bad for Indians, particularly women and children, but that they would not bother a white man. "Everything is different for white men and Indians," he said, a rationalization that would permit him to maintain his belief in the evil qualities of the caterpillar in the face of what he considered to be certain ridicule by a white man.

Since the aboriginal Chipewyan religious system was not elaborate or complex, it is perhaps easy to understand why most of it has disappeared under the impact of more than one hundred years of direct contact with Christian missionaries. Shamanism, at least among the Snowdrift Chipewyan, has long since disappeared, leaving little except the above described residue of magical beliefs and taboos that are rooted in aboriginal beliefs. Roman Catholic missionaries first visited the Chipewyan of the Lake Athabasca region in 1847, and as early as 1866 or 1868 a clergyman of the Church of England lived at Fort Chipewyan (Petitot, 1885, p. 47). The post at Fort Resolution received a visit from a Roman Catholic missionary for the first time in 1852, and a permanent mission was established four years later (*Idem.*, 1891, p. 85).

Snowdrift is a Roman Catholic community, and the Oblate order has had a church in the area for many years. Formerly the church was located on a point of land about two miles from the present village, but in 1952, after it had become obvious that the Indians were going to reside in permanent dwellings around the Hudson's Bay Company post, a church building, which contains a residence for the priest, was constructed in the village. The community has no resident priest, but one from Fort Resolution makes frequent visits throughout the year, often staying for as long as two months. There is always a priest in the community at Christmas and Easter, and it is seldom that more than two months elapse without a visit from one, even if it is brief.

When the priest is in the village, there are services twice a day, a Low Mass in the morning at 8:00 and one in the evening at 7:30. In addition to

the regular services, there is a High Mass at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday. During the week there are usually between ten and twenty people at the morning service and thirty to forty at the evening service. At the High Mass on Sunday, as many as eighty or ninety will attend. Everyone has a copy of the Mass in English and Latin, and most have a Chipewyan translation also. Both men and women have a tendency to dress up for church services on Sunday. Small children attend with their parents, and their talking and crying sometimes make it almost impossible for people in the rear of the small church to hear what is being said. Individuals sometimes leave during the course of a service, and many come late.

Confirmation takes place early, usually at the age of eight or nine. Since, until recently, children at this age have been going to school at Fort Smith, their instruction took place there. However, the occasional classes which the priest has held in the village will become more frequent in the future. In 1961, the priest considered that there were only two or three boys who knew enough to serve Mass.

When the priest is not in the village, a Sunday prayer meeting is held in one of the houses. There is hymn singing, and someone may give a short talk on a religious subject. The former sub-chief, who considers himself to be something of a lay religious leader in the community, told the author that the prayer meetings were usually held at his house and that he frequently gave a little talk on how to lead better and more useful lives. He complained that the young people did not listen to him, and it was certainly true that all the villagers objected to his 'preaching' on the grounds that, as might be expected, they do not like to be told what to do.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the concepts and ideals of Christianity have become part of Snowdrift life. Outward signs of religious belief are fairly rare, with the exception of religious pictures which are displayed in every house. Grace is said at meals in some homes and always at public feasts. Apparently prayers are also said regularly by some people, and one informant admitted that, although he does not go to church often, he says his prayers regularly. When people write letters to friends and relatives in Yellowknife and other communities, they almost invariably mention that they have prayed for the recipient of the letter, and they usually ask the recipient to pray for them. Although there does not seem to be any strong feeling against working on Sunday, as a rule people look forward to this day as a day of rest. If there is work that needs to be done, they will do it, but most people like to sleep late, go to church, and spend the day loafing, picnicking, or visiting.

Discussion on religious subjects is rare, and the author cannot escape the feeling that religion is not really important except to a relatively small number of older people.¹ On the other hand, true skepticism also seems to be rare; most people are willing to accept what they are told in church whether or not they use the information as a guide for the conduct of their lives. Several informants did say that they occasionally argue with the priest about religion. These men said that they did not know whether to believe or not to believe. The Bible talks about hell and heaven, but who knows whether these places

¹A similar lack of religiosity is noted by Helm (1961, p. 116) for the Slave Indians of Lynx Point.

actually exist. One informant thought that perhaps heaven was just for white people: They make a lot of money and have lots of nice clothes and a nice warm house to live in; then when they die, they go to heaven. The Indian, on the other hand, has a very hard time making a living, and he is often cold and hungry. Sometimes his house is not good, and he has to work hard outside in very cold weather. Maybe he is already in hell. The priest has a pretty good life too, with lots of food sent in to him from outside the village. He, too, has a place to live that is warm and comfortable. What right has he to preach about people going to hell? He is living in a kind of heaven right now. — Still, this particular informant does not like to think that everything will be finished when he dies. He admits that he really does not know what to think. It certainly cannot be said that skeptical comments such as these are typical of the majority of Snowdrift people, and it is probably true that speculation about religious doctrines is not indulged in very frequently by the villagers. Nevertheless, these few comments seem to indicate that at least some of the people consider the Roman Catholic faith as being essentially alien to the Indian way of life.

If some Snowdrift Indians think of Roman Catholicism as basically unrelated to their way of life, it is certain that all of them think of the church as being a large, impersonal, wealthy organization, like the Canadian Government and the Hudson's Bay Company, imposed on the village from the outside, to be viewed as a possible source of income for the villagers. The people expect to be hired for jobs at the church just as they are hired by other outside agencies. In other words, people do not think of the church as a part of the community or as something which is an essential and integral part of their everyday life. When an informant was asked why he thought that the church did not maintain a priest in the village permanently, he answered that it was because there is not enough money to be made from the people of Snowdrift.

With this point of view in mind, it is easy to understand why, when some work needs to be done around the church or some new construction is planned, the people immediately look upon the church as simply another potential source of wage labour. The priest, quite naturally, does not approve of this attitude and tries, without notable success, to persuade the people to contribute their time and labour to the church. The Indians believe that to help the priest or to do something for the church is good and that a person will receive his reward in heaven. However, this is not nearly so much of an incentive as a cash payment. The priest is determined that the church is not to be a source of wage labour for the villagers and tries to do all the work himself.

There can be no doubt that the attitude of the villagers toward the church depends a great deal on their feelings about the priest. A popular priest is one who is friendly and informal in conversation and who gives the impression that the interests of the villagers are uppermost in his mind. They do not like a priest who is abrupt and overly critical or who berates them for not going to church or offering their services free to the church. By the very nature of his position, a priest is in a difficult situation in the community since he must, to a certain extent, tell the people what to do; at the very least, he must point out the difference between right and wrong behaviour.

The people do not like this, and frequently in the past, relations between the villagers and their priest have been strained.

In conclusion, it must be said that the church might have done something to improve its position in the community. In the past the church has not concerned itself with social problems, and little or nothing has been done to help the people to prepare for the sort of community existence that has been forced upon them. The author is under the impression that the church might have been an important factor in helping to develop a sense of community cohesiveness. Instead, many priests appear to have simply gone through the motions of fulfilling their duties to their parishioners. It has been almost as though the church and its activities were an end in themselves rather than a service for the village and an integral part of village life. The attitude sometimes seems to be that the church is in the village for the people to take advantage of if they wish, but if they don't, it does not really matter.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions

CHYPEWYAN ACCULTURATION

Recently some anthropologists, particularly those concerned with comparative acculturation and acculturation theory, have noted a distinct similarity among present-day Indian communities in the United States and Canada. Spicer (1961, p. 1) has pointed out that

as knowledge of life on the reservation deepens, the repetition of certain combinations of Indian and Anglo-American ways becomes unmistakable. Similar trends in the replacement of material culture, similarities in dialects of English, likenesses in kinship behavior and types of extended families, comparative growths of nativism and ceremonial life, and even what one feels to be nearly identical constellations of personality traits thrust themselves on one's attention. As one goes from reservation to reservation, the feeling grows that what one sees today is what one saw not long before on some other reservation.

All this has led Spicer to the belief that

there are fewer than half a dozen, perhaps no more than three or four, ways of life, or that is to say distinctive cultures, in all the reservations of the United States and Canada (1961, p. 2).

Although it is true that the large number of studies of acculturation of North American Indians has provided data from which identification of recurrent processes may be made, it is also true, as James has pointed out for the Wisconsin Ojibwa (1961, p. 728), that a deculturative process can be noted in many Indian communities. Native cultures have, in many cases, been replaced by what James calls "reservation subcultures of a 'poor-White' type" (1961, p. 744). This deculturative process occurs, then, when the abandonment of an aboriginal cultural trait is not replaced with a White cultural equivalent. For the Ojibwa, according to James,

loss of . . . religious beliefs has not always meant Christianization, and similarly, decline of rice gathering or sugar making has not necessarily meant compensatory White orientation of cash pursuits (1961, p. 728).

It is true that so far as the loss of Chipewyan culture traits is concerned Snowdrift has become a deculturated community, and its minimal appropriation of new cultural traits has produced, to some extent, a 'poor-White' type of subculture. Although it cannot be stated clearly that a conservative-progressive distinction actually operates as a socio-economic class line in Snowdrift as it does for James' Deerpoint Ojibwa community (1961, p. 728), there is a growing tendency for the more progressive, more well-to-do individuals in Snowdrift to be considered White-oriented while the so-called 'poor' families, in the economic sense, are apt to be considered as Indian-

oriented. This has nothing to do with the presence or absence of Chipewyan cultural habits or techniques.

The process of documenting the deculturation process at Snowdrift is complicated by the paucity of detailed information concerning aboriginal Chipewyan culture. There is, therefore, no really adequate base line against which to measure either the extent or the rate of deculturation. However, it is certainly safe to say, on the basis of the data previously presented, that there is very little that is distinctively Chipewyan which remains as a part of present-day Snowdrift life. Village residents fail to identify much in their way of life as being linked with the past; ties with the community are generally recognized as being more important than ethnic affiliation. As previously mentioned, Snowdrift people consider themselves superior to residents of other communities, but this superiority is always based on personality and character traits rather than on ethnic background. The only purely ethnic identification is that which is based on linguistic usage.

The deculturative process is particularly evident with regard to the economic criteria discussed in Chapter 3. Aboriginal hunting patterns have been either replaced or completely altered, even though hunting cannot be said to be subordinate to the trapping from which the Indians derive the largest amount of their cash income. The shift to a trapping economy has, over time, resulted in changes in the settlement patterns that have been accentuated in recent years as a result of other factors. The shift to a trapping-oriented economy may be considered deculturative because as a subsistence technique trapping has, to some extent, replaced the traditional hunting without providing either an acceptable food substitute or adequate wages to permit the purchase of comparable amounts of food. At the same time, involvement in an external economic activity has, in addition to partially displacing traditional subsistence activities, created a greater need for and dependence on trade goods; a need that cannot always be adequately fulfilled by a trapping income. The changes in settlement patterns that have resulted from this increased dependency on those who furnish trade goods have created new deculturative problems which will be discussed presently.

In a paper concerned with the processes of culture change, Murphy and Steward have pointed out that

the process of gradual shift from a subsistence economy to dependence upon trade is evidently irreversible, provided access to trade goods is maintained. It can be said, therefore, that the aboriginal culture is destined to be replaced by a new type which reaches its culmination when the responsible processes have run their course. This culmination point may be said to have been reached when the amount of activity devoted to production for trade grows to such an extent that it interferes with the aboriginal subsistence cycle and associated social organization and makes their continuance impossible (1956, p. 336).

Such a culmination point has long since been reached by the Snowdrift Chipewyan, and the deculturative result has been the creation of a community that is 'lower-class' as far as economic criteria are concerned. The income from trapping, as shown in Chapter 3, is generally low and unpredictable; yet there is considerable dependence on the products that must be purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company. The standard of living in the community

is uniformly low, and most of the earned income of the villagers, aside from trapping, is also an outreach of Euro-Canadian institutions.

The subcultural status of Snowdrift is reflected in its institutional life. What little formal organizational activity there is in the village is confined entirely to school and church affairs aside from that which takes place at the behest of the Indian Affairs Branch. As previously indicated, village leadership is poorly developed and can be said to exist only in so far as it has been deemed necessary to have individuals in the community with whom the Indian Affairs Branch representatives can deal. Thus the chief and councillors are creations of the Branch, and their authority is limited to dealings with the Agency Superintendent concerning projects for the community as they are conceived and put into effect by the external agency. This situation is a further example of the deculturative process. Aboriginal social structure, suited as it was for the pre-contact groupings of single families or groups of families, has proved totally inadequate for dealing with the kinds of organizational problems that arise as a result of community living. The absence of community organization, then, is not only a significant aspect of deculturation, but it poses a real problem as far as the future of the community is concerned.

Viewing the acculturative influences that have affected the Snowdrift community, it is obvious that there has been little uniformity in the rate of change which has occurred beginning with the initial contacts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Residence patterns have been shifting to a more centralized and settled type, a process that has been going on more or less steadily since the time of initial contact and has recently reached a sort of culmination in the community as it exists today. Presumably the next step would be the abandonment of outlying communities like Snowdrift and the concentration of population in selected urban settlements like Yellowknife. Christianity, on the other hand, presumably gained a firm foothold at the time of its introduction about one hundred years ago and has remained relatively unchanged up to the present time. It cannot really be said that the people of Snowdrift have been affected by rapid or drastic change. The introduction of formal education, wage labour, and innovations in technology has come about gradually, and their effects are just beginning to be felt.

The introduction of trapping and trap-lines, where the emphasis is on individual effort and initiative, undoubtedly helped to weaken the social groupings of families based upon the leadership of a skilled hunter. Wage labour, which rewards only the individual, is likely to establish even more atomistic relationships. However, it has been noted that, with regard to most products of hunting and fishing, the traditional patterns of sharing are still maintained. The extent to which a new language, a new religion, and western education have brought with them new values and created new objectives is difficult to determine. These factors, however, are going to be significant for the future.

The result of the acculturation process is generally assumed to be some form of cultural integration whereby there is an adjustment of beliefs and customs from the differing traditions that have made up the contact situation. This adjustment among the Snowdrift Chipewyan has been extremely one-sided and may therefore be thought of as a case of directed culture change.

According to Spicer (1961, p. 521), directed change can be said to have taken place if one or both of the following two criteria can be distinguished:

- (1) If definite sanctions, whether political, economic, supernatural, or even moral, are regularly brought to bear by members of one society on members of another, one condition for directed contact is met. (2) If, in addition, members of the society applying the sanctions are interested in bringing about changes in the cultural behavior of members of the other society, then both necessary conditions for directed contact exist.

With regard to Spicer's first condition, it is obvious that what might be called the political or organizational life of the Snowdrift people is almost exclusively guided by governmental personnel. Village leadership and community organization are non-existent except with reference to the Indian Affairs Branch. Most of the wage labour opportunities for the Indians are also made available by the Branch. The relationship of the Hudson's Bay Company with the Indians, though largely non-directed at present, has been a major aspect of directed culture change in the past. All religious sanctions stem from the activities of Roman Catholic missionaries, and a certain amount of moral training is a part of the educational system now available to the villagers. As far as Spicer's second criterion is concerned, it is certain that the mission and the school personnel are attempting to bring about changes in the behaviour and values of the villagers. The same can be said for the Canadian Government, the avowed policies of which have been aimed at raising the standard of living in the community and instituting forms of self-government. In fact, it can be said with some degree of assurance that all outside agencies with which the Snowdrift people have dealings are interested in changing the cultural behaviour of the Indians in some way.

The circumstances of directed culture change that exist at Snowdrift are by no means unique and may be considered characteristic of the acculturation process among most North American Indians. Directed culture change is essentially deculturative and produces the reservation subcultures which James has described (1961, p. 744). Sometimes it is the relative lack of complexity of the Indian culture or the nature and duration of contact that hastens the deculturative process. Sometimes it is the reforming or uplifting zeal of the stronger, more complex culture that is responsible. More often, and particularly in northwestern Canada, it is a combination of these factors that has produced the uniformity that can be noted among Indian communities, regardless of size, location, or ethnic affiliation. With this in mind, the important thing to realize about Snowdrift is not that it is a Chipewyan community nor that it is inhabited by a group of people whose way of life is characteristically Chipewyan, but rather that it is a characteristic northern community tied into Canadian culture in a particular way. In other words, Snowdrift is a bush community exhibiting a sort of bush culture that is duplicated many times in many places throughout the Canadian north. Like other communities similarly situated, it is heavily dependent on outside sources of supply, and it is changing and developing along particular lines that have little or nothing to do with ethnic background. It is the author's impression that the pattern of directed culture change and the resulting deculturation have largely eliminated ethnic differences throughout the entire Great Slave Lake - Mackenzie River area and have created the kind of

reservation subculture that has been noted in the United States and southern Canada. However, further studies in the area are needed to adequately document this point of view.

THE ECONOMIC FUTURE

One point that should be obvious from the discussion of the yearly round in Chapter 3 is the importance of caribou to the people of Snowdrift. These animals form the staple diet of the villagers, and, since the Chipewyan Indians are primarily meat eaters, even fish is not considered as an adequate substitute though they are plentiful in the environment. It has been shown that the Indians spend a large part of the year in trapping animals that have no food value. Caribou and, to a lesser extent, moose, together with food purchased at the store, sustain the people during the trapping season. Fish are an adequate protection against food shortages, and the people of Snowdrift probably live better than the residents of many other Indian communities in the Northwest Territories simply because they have this additional and predictable source of food. All informants agreed that credit at the store, obtained through the trading of furs, was not sufficient to maintain a family even during the months of the trapping season. Therefore, if anything were to happen to the caribou supply, the villagers would face a food shortage of fairly serious proportions.

There can be no doubt that the ability to earn a cash income, particularly during the relatively free summer months, would do a great deal to offset this dependence on caribou, would not interfere with the important fall fishing, and would provide a buffer against the uncertainties of a trapping economy.

Any attempt to assess the extent to which opportunities for wage employment in the Snowdrift area will increase in future years is complicated by the fact that it is difficult to predict the future of those opportunities which are already in existence. A growing tourist industry and the continued importance of commercial fishing seem to be indicated. In 1944, before commercial fishing was begun, surveys established the fact that Great Slave Lake could yield a total fish catch of 4,500,000 pounds annually. Further studies, carried on after the fishery had been established, seemed to justify an upward revision of the catch quota to 9,000,000 pounds (Fisher, 1958, p. 96-99). In a review of the first ten years of commercial fishing on the lake, a statement was made that this estimate could be sustained and possibly even increased (Kennedy, 1956). The average landings between 1956 and 1959 totalled 6,462,000 pounds; 4,311,000 taken in summer and 2,151,000 in winter (Anon., 1959, p. 18). The Annual Report of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada for 1958-59 contains a statement to the effect that fishing pressure has not been excessive since commercial fishing began, but that the pressure could not be increased without adversely affecting the domestic fishing.

All of this seems to indicate a healthy industry that will continue to be an important part of the local economy for some time to come. However, local observers who have been watching the industry for the past fifteen years

are under the impression that within the next ten years the fishing potential of the lake will be reduced to the point where commercial fishing will no longer be worthwhile. Sports fishing will also be poor. These observers point out that there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of commercial outfits operating during the past few summers. It is certainly true that during the summer of 1960 the fishermen were loud in their complaints about their poor catches, and several independent boat owners and captains ceased operation in the middle of the summer. In 1961, as previously mentioned, one company withdrew its boats from the lake. Certainly commercial fishing was not a major economic factor for the villagers during that summer. Although there are fewer boats than in the past, the fishing methods and equipment have improved, and the fishermen are still taking large numbers of fish. It must be said, therefore, that although the facts seem to indicate the continued vigour of commercial fishing on Great Slave Lake, its bright future, at least as far as the employment potential for Snowdrift people is concerned, cannot be predicted with complete confidence.

While commercial fishing is an activity of long standing on the lake, the area is just beginning to be opened up for sports fishing. In 1954 a lodge was opened in the vicinity of Taltheli Narrows, and it has been extremely successful. Because of its location in a remote area and the expense of transportation, such a fishing lodge is within the means of only the more affluent sportsmen, but the fishing has been very good, and the lodge at Taltheli has built up a good reputation. As mentioned previously, two lodges were built near Snowdrift in 1960, but it is too early to predict the extent to which they will be successful. The success of any lodge on the lake will, of course, be dependent upon the extent to which the fishing remains good.

If the tourist business does grow to become economically important, even on a short term basis, there are many ways that the Indians could both benefit from and aid the growing industry. They are skilled at the construction of log cabins and could therefore be employed in the building of lodges and other facilities for tourist camps. In addition, they could be employed for the hauling and cutting of wood, not only for construction but also for fuel supply. With proper training, the Indians would be available for hire to sports fishermen for guide work. As previously indicated, a number of problems will have to be overcome before Indians and Euro-Canadians can work successfully together to develop the tourist industry in the Snowdrift area. Although well aware of the advantages of working within the framework of a money economy, the Snowdrift Indians do not appear to be psychologically adjusted to the requirements involved in working for someone else. Therefore, the work that they do under these circumstances cannot always be compared, as far as quality is concerned, with the work that they do for themselves. Careful supervision would be required in any work situation involving the people of Snowdrift. After all, a satisfactory employment situation does not exist in any culture unless those employed fully understand the job and its expectations. In a cross-cultural work situation the problem of communication adds to the difficulty of establishing these ideal employment conditions. Prejudice against employing Indians runs high in the Great Slave Lake area, and this, too, will have to be overcome if the indigenous population is to make a contribution to the economic growth of the region.

If commercial and sports fishing are not to be relied on to provide summer employment for the Indians of Snowdrift, some consideration might be given to the establishment of a subsidized industry that would not only provide local employment but would benefit a wide area. One industry that might be successfully introduced is a sawmill to provide lumber for various locations on the lake, for mining interests in the area, and for communities along the Mackenzie River. The Indians could be employed to cut and haul logs, and the lumber could be sent out on the barges that come to the village at various times during the summer only to return empty. There were three such barges during the summer of 1960 and one in 1961. It would presumably be necessary for the government to subsidize such an operation to the extent of investing in the mill and instituting a training program for its operation and maintenance. The extent to which such an operation might eventually become self-sufficient and even show a profit should be thoroughly investigated. Such an industry not only could provide steady work for the inhabitants of Snowdrift but also could be a factor in strengthening village organization and leadership.

The above suggestions should be considered as random thoughts on the subject of providing financial stability for a group of people whose subsistence base no longer provides them with all they need and who are subject to the unpredictable fluctuations that are characteristic of a trapping economy. It has been shown that the uncertainties of trapping are in themselves demoralizing and that there are other factors at work to prevent the optimum utilization of the environment for purposes of trapping. Any program for planned economic change in the Snowdrift area should begin with the realization that, if the people of the area are to continue to lead useful lives and if they are to attain a standard of living comparable with that of people in other rural areas of Canada, trapping must be augmented by some more reliable source of income.

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APPENDIX

In Chapter 3, there is reference (p. 17) to a specific trapping area that was visited by the author during December 1961. As previously mentioned, this trap-line began approximately thirty miles southwest of the village and ran for a distance of nearly eighty miles (*see* Figure 4). The author, accompanied by a trapper who will be referred to here as Maurice Beauvoir, left Snowdrift on the 6th of December and returned on the 20th. The record of this trapping expedition, a condensed account transcribed from field notes, is presented in diary form so as to provide as realistic a picture as possible of the daily routine on a trap-line. All names used are fictitious, and the numbers of the camping places refer to Figure 4; by consulting this map the reader can follow the progress of the author and his companion. For a summary statement on the results of this trip, the reader is referred to Chapter 3.

December 6. We left Snowdrift shortly after noon with a team of five dogs. The snow on the lake was hard, and the trails were good because no snow had fallen since Maurice and his brother-in-law Jimmy had been over them on their return to the village at the end of November. At the point where the trail left Great Slave Lake and proceeded overland to Murky Lake, we came upon a wolverine caught in a No. 3 trap. Maurice shot it, and, after noting that the trap belonged to George Minton, we hung the dead animal in a tree to be picked up by the owner the next time he checked his traps. We crossed Murky Lake and portaged to Ogilvie Lake, at the north end of which Maurice's uncle, Jean Desjardins, has a fall fish camp. This was a convenient place to spend the night since it is a full day's journey to the next camping spot. We made camp (No. 1) after a trip of only two and one-half hours. Jean's camp consists of a log fish cache filled with fish taken during the fall and stored for use during winter trapping. Maurice, along with his uncle and his family, comes to this camp in the late fall and fishes through the ice soon after it freezes. They usually stay in the camp for about two weeks. At the camp-site is a log tent frame covered with an old, badly worn tent, which provided us with shelter during the night. It contained a small stove, crudely made from an old five-gallon oil can, and some basic food supplies including lard, tea, salt, and sugar. We unharnessed the dogs, tied them to trees, and gave them one fish each from the cache. We chopped wood and had a dinner of Ptarmigan, bannock, and tea. After dinner, Maurice worked for a while by candlelight repairing a pair of snowshoes; we were in our sleeping bags by 9:30 P.M.

December 7. We left camp at 8:00 A.M., well before daylight, after a breakfast of bannock, butter, and coffee. We proceeded south to an old camp-site (No. 2) where Maurice had left his tent and some other gear on a

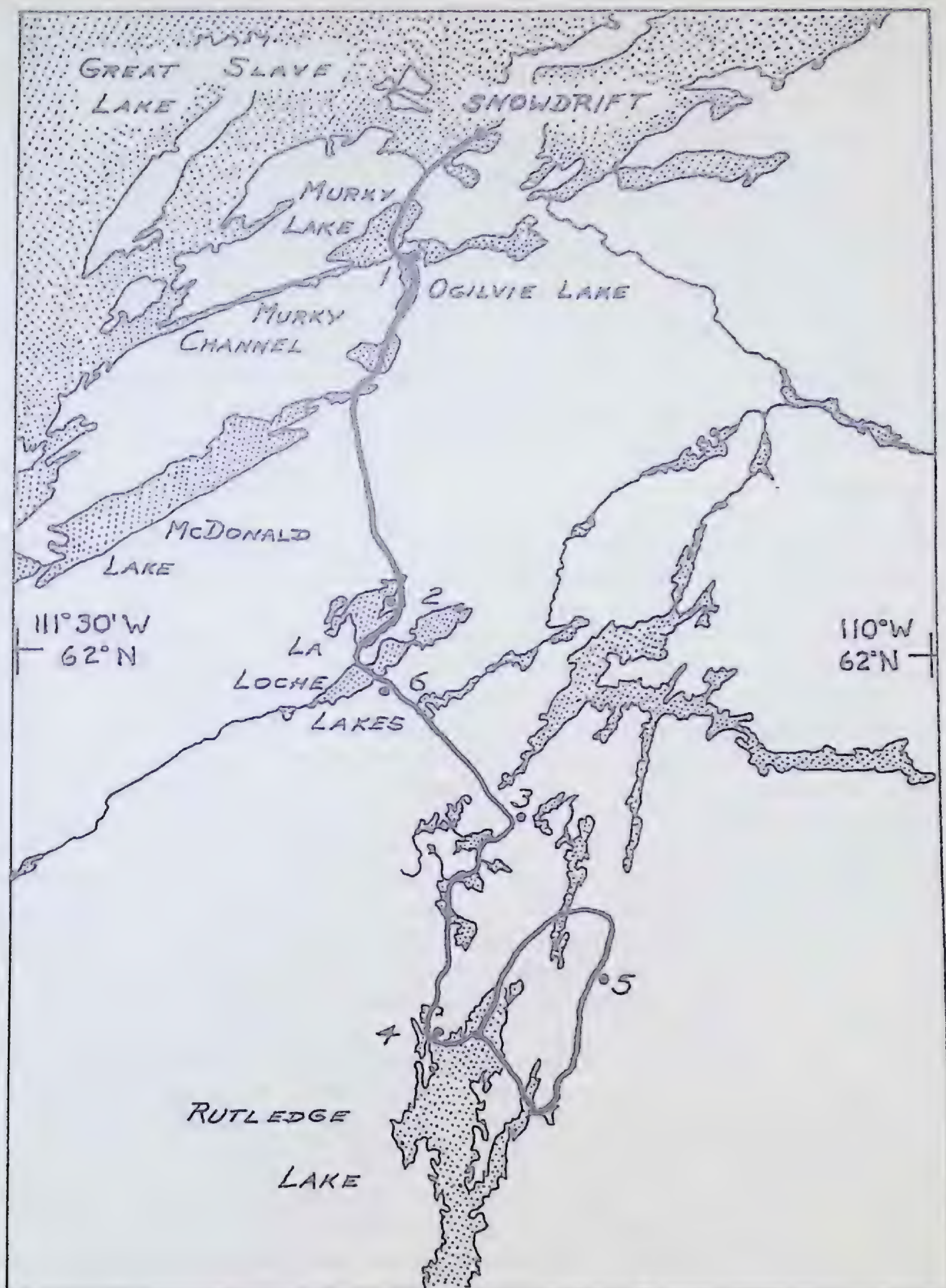


FIGURE 4—Trap-line map, December 1961.

previous trip. We arrived there at 5:30 P.M., the last hour and a half of the trip having been made in the dark. The snow gets deeper as we move south. On the lakes wind has obliterated the trail, but it is good on the portages. We stopped for lunch about noon and ate a Ptarmigan killed in the morning.

During the afternoon we checked ten traps, all of which had been set two weeks previously when Maurice was returning from his first trip around his trap-line. Of these ten traps, which had been set for mink or marten, all but one had been disturbed by a wolverine. In one case the wolverine had stolen a mink whose foot still remained in the trap. From two other traps the marauder had taken hares that had been caught. The other traps, robbed of their bait, had not been sprung. As we moved from trap to trap, it was discouraging to observe the footprints of the wolverine following the sled trail. In the one mink set that had not been disturbed, Maurice caught a silver fox. After arriving at the camp-site, we set up a small canvas tent about five feet by seven. We cut spruce boughs and laid them down for a floor; a small homemade stove provided heat. Our caribou skins and sleeping bags were laid on the spruce boughs. When it is very cold, as it is tonight, there is much frost on the inside of the tent no matter how hot the fire is. At this place Maurice has a net set under the ice; he will check it in the morning.

December 8. Up at 7:30 A.M. It is very cold this morning. Maurice checked his net, and we were ready to move on at 11:15 A.M. Today we went south about ten miles to check a series of traps, returning to camp No. 2 about 5:30 P.M. Of these traps, eight were set for mink and two for white fox. There were none for marten as the country we are moving into contains only scrub spruce, and marten prefer big spruce. Of the eight mink sets, one contained a mink, one a lynx, and a wolverine had disturbed the rest; the bait had been taken, but the traps remained set. Both fox sets, located on small treeless islands in the middle of large lakes, contained a fox, one a red and the other a white. We also checked a single lynx snare that was empty. By the time we reached camp tonight, I was impressed with the hardships of a trapper's life. Inside the small tent there is barely enough room for ourselves, food, wood supply, and dead animals. We were so tired and cold that for a long time we just sat waiting for the fire to warm up the tent. Then we made tea, but it was some time before we could bring ourselves to do anything else. Even before we were able to warm ourselves in the tent, which was, of course, already pitched, we had to chop wood and feed the dogs and chop a hole in the thick ice of the lake for water. This evening, the animals taken during the day were hung in the tent to thaw. Maurice skinned a mink, first cutting the skin of the back legs and making a slit down the length of the tail. The skin is then removed from the tail and back legs, and peeled off the animal like a sweater. Most animals are skinned in this way. Maurice will stretch his skins after he returns to the village.

December 9. Today we stayed in camp to give the dogs a rest. After a breakfast of bannock and coffee, Maurice checked his net and cut firewood while I went hunting and killed three spruce hens near the tent. Maurice then set four hare snares. There are many hare tracks around the camp, but we never see any of these animals during the day. In the early afternoon Maurice went back on foot to re-check the last trap we checked yesterday. He had seen fresh mink tracks there and was in hopes of taking a mink; he returned empty-handed. The reason for the one day lay-over here is not only to rest the dogs, but to wait for a possible catch in the traps found empty yesterday.

December 10. Up at 7.00 A.M. and after a breakfast of porridge and coffee we packed and were on our way by 9:00 A.M. During the morning we re-checked the traps visited the day before yesterday but found nothing. By noon we had progressed beyond the point where we turned back the day before yesterday, and we stopped for a lunch of fried hare, tea, and bannock. During the afternoon we checked four mink sets and a lynx snare without success. Maurice pulled up one mink trap and set another lynx snare. At 3:30 P.M. we made camp (No. 3) by the side of a lake. We are now about four hours travelling time from Rutledge Lake, the centre of Maurice's trap-line. Shortly after leaving this morning, we crossed a long portage of more than five miles. It was over very hilly country, and an abundance of moose tracks were visible. Maurice talks of coming back this way later next week to trap. He is worried because there are so many signs of wolverines as we get closer to the centre of his trap-line. He is also worried because we did not catch anything today, and he remembers that north of camp No. 2 we at least had moderate success.

December 11. Up at 7:00 A.M., packed and ready to depart by 9:00 A.M. We stopped for lunch at 1:00 P.M. and were only about an hour and a half from our destination, an old camp-site (No. 4) where Maurice had his second net. During the day, we checked fourteen traps, eleven set for mink, one for lynx, and two for white fox. We caught nothing except two hares. Maurice is discouraged because we do not see more mink tracks. We did see many fox tracks on the lakes and noted several places where a fox had killed a Ptarmigan or hare. On the strength of this, Maurice pulled up three of his mink sets and set two more traps for white fox. After camp was made, we checked the net and took more than fifty fish, enough for our dogs during the next few days. This net, like the preceding one, had been left set since Maurice was here at the end of November. Late this afternoon we also set five hare snares. So far, the results of the trapping have been rather disappointing to Maurice, and he often resets his mink traps in a rather desultory manner as if he really did not expect to catch anything. He is looking forward to the road work near Yellowknife next month, and that may be why he does not seem to be much interested in trapping. Maurice has trapped in this area every year since he was 17 years old (he is now 25), but he thinks that perhaps he will try the region west of Snowdrift next year.

December 12. Today is a day of rest for the dogs. Maurice checked the hare snares and caught two hares. In the afternoon he went on snowshoes to check a mink set nearby but caught only a squirrel. We both hunted Ptarmigan throughout most of the afternoon but without success. This evening when Maurice and I were having a general discussion on the subject of trapping, I mentioned that if I were a trapper, I would build a cabin here, and probably at several other points where we have camped, in order to avoid this grim, cramped life in a small tent. He said that he would do so too if he were sure that fur-bearers would be continuously plentiful and if the fur prices were more predictable. However, both of these factors are such that it just is not worth making elaborate preparations. Also, what if one should decide to trap in another area the following year? Maurice says that he has a debt of \$40 at the Hudson's Bay Company for trapping this time

and that all he needs is two mink to clear his debt. Beyond that he does not seem particularly concerned except that he would like a little spending money for Christmas.

December 13. This morning, after a breakfast of porridge and coffee, we were ready to leave by 10 o'clock. Today we begin the big loop at the end of Maurice's trap-line that will bring us back to camp No. 4 by tomorrow evening. Originally we intended to make this loop in one day, but apparently Maurice has thought better of it and decided to make it in two easy days. Today we checked nine traps, eight set for mink and one for marten. In these traps were caught one mink, two hares, two squirrels, and a Canada Jay; not a very inspiring success. I am impressed with the distance between some of the traps. It is true that another trapper is in the same general area, but even so there is no doubt that the region could be more effectively trapped than it is. The vegetation in the country covered today seems more stunted, as if it had been burned over in the not too distant past. There were lots of fresh moose tracks too. During the day we shot one Spruce Partridge, but we ate hares for supper. So far we have relied heavily on hares for food, usually eating the ones caught in the traps as our snares have not been too successful. We made a camp (No. 5) about 4:00 P.M.

December 14. This morning we were on our way by 9 o'clock and completed the loop around the Rutledge Lake area, returning to camp No. 4 in the late afternoon. Two mink were taken from six traps set for these animals. We took up all the traps checked yesterday and today; some we brought along to set elsewhere, and the rest we hung in trees near the locations of the old set where they will presumably be placed again next year. A trap is frequently set in the same place for several consecutive years. An inch of fresh snow fell last night; consequently the trail was heavy today. After making camp late this afternoon, we checked the net and also the hare snares; two animals were taken, one of which we had for supper. Tomorrow we are going to start back since Maurice believes that the trapping will be better at camp No. 2 than it has been here.

December 15. This morning we were up and eating breakfast by 7 o'clock. Maurice went on snowshoes to check the single trap that he had checked on the 12th, our last day of rest; this time the trap contained a mink. Shortly after his return, we packed up and headed north. We made our way slowly toward camp No. 3, arriving about 4:30 P.M., just as darkness was falling. The dogs seemed very tired (their third consecutive work day), and our progress was slow. Most of the time Maurice walked ahead on snowshoes breaking the trail. During the day we checked thirteen traps: eight for mink, three for fox, and two for lynx. The take was one mink, a red fox, and three hares which provided us with both lunch and supper.

December 16. This morning we were ready to leave by 8:45. About three inches of snow had fallen during the night, and by noon it was obvious that we were not going to make camp No. 2 as originally planned. This was discouraging because it meant a change in our plans for the rest of the trip. Now we will not be able to re-check the traps visited on December 8 but will simply rest the dogs for two full days and then head home. Today we

checked some of the traps visited on December 8th and 10th and took one mink. As it has turned out, we have not been able to profit much from our proposed early return to camp No. 2. Trips north and south along the trap-line from this camp had to be abandoned because the dogs were tired and because we failed to reach camp No. 2 tonight. Made camp about 4:30 P.M. (No. 6).

December 17. This morning we did not break camp until nearly 10 o'clock, there being no hurry because of the short distance that we have to travel. There is more snow up this way, and the dogs had a hard time, but we arrived at camp No. 2 by 1:00 P.M. Today we again checked traps that had been previously checked on December 8th and 10th; one mink was taken. So far, Maurice has lost three mink and two lynx. As previously mentioned, one of the mink was taken by a wolverine, while two were poorly caught and escaped by chewing off their toes. One lynx took the trap with him, and another broke a wire snare.

December 18. Today is our first day of rest, and we relaxed until about 10:30 A.M., when Maurice chopped some wood and then set off on snowshoes to visit some of his traps to the north. This is a compromise plan because, according to our original plans, we were to go north with the dogs to check all the traps in that direction and to reset them. On foot Maurice was able to check seven traps and he caught one mink. He also set six new traps, five for mink and one for wolverine. Now it will be possible, for the traps he checked as well as the new ones he set, to have two nights in which to catch something before we check them again on the way home.

December 19. Our second day of rest. About 10:30 A.M. Maurice started out to visit on foot the four closest traps to the south as he had done on December 8th. He returned after about two hours without having taken anything. I then made a trip north on snowshoes in hopes of seeing some Ptarmigan but returned empty-handed in about one hour. Meanwhile, Maurice had checked the net and made some repairs on the sled preparatory to our early departure in the morning. We have been getting a little low on food, and since hares and Ptarmigan do not seem to be plentiful, we have been living on boiled whitefish. Tomorrow night we will be at Jean Desjardins' fish camp (No. 1).

December 20. We were ready to depart this morning by 8 o'clock. The dogs were rested, and we made good progress. By 1:00 P.M. we had come down off the esker south of Ogilvie Lake and had checked the last trap. While preparing lunch, the smoke from our fire attracted Jean Desjardins, who was crossing the small lake east of McDonald Lake. He had left Snowdrift this morning to check traps in the vicinity of the village and had made a good trail. He expected to return to the village tonight. We followed him and made such good progress that we arrived at the fish camp (No. 1) by 4:15 P.M. We then decided to go on into Snowdrift, and we arrived there at 6:30 P.M. During the day we checked seventeen traps: twelve for mink, four for marten, and one for wolverine; our total catch was two hares. All but five of these seventeen traps had been checked on foot by Maurice two days before.

Plate I



SNOWDRIFT HOUSES

Plate II



A



B



C



D

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

(a) The Hudson's Bay Company complex, (b) The Hudson's Bay Company store and dock, (c) The federal school, (d) The Roman Catholic church

Plate III



A



B



C



D

SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN THE VILLAGE

(a) Meeting the plane, (b) A visit from the nurse, (c) Covering a canoe, (d) Talking with the Agency Superintendent

Plate IV



A



B



C



D

SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN THE VILLAGE (Cont.)

(a) Building a house, (b) Repairing an outboard motor, (c) Arrival of the supply barge, (d) Sewing a smokehouse cover

Plate V



A



B



C



D

SUMMER SUBSISTENCE

(a) Wage employment, (b) Wage employment, (c) Drying fish, (d) Departure on a caribou hunt

Plate VI



A



B



C



D

SUMMER SUBSISTENCE

(a) Preparing a moose hide, (b) Skinning a porcupine, (c) Skinning a caribou head,
(d) Hare hunters preparing a meal in the bush

Plate VII



A



B



C



D

ON THE TRAP-LINE

(a) A trapper's camp, (b) Checking a net, (c) Trapper with team and loaded toboggan, (d) Setting a trap for mink

Plate VIII



A



B



C



D

RECREATION AND DEATH

(a) Lounging in front of the store, (b) An outdoor card game, (c) A funeral, (d) A funeral



OCT 3 1968

FOR REFERENCE

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

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~~Binding 1968~~

John Long

